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ABSTRACT

This document proposes a comprehensive education and lifelong learning program for Wales through 2010. The primary goal of the proposal is to transform Wales into a learning country where high-quality, lifelong learning provides the skills people need to prosper in the new economy, liberates talent, extends opportunities, and empowers communities. The proposal places strong emphasis on partnership with local communities to meet locally determined needs and priorities more flexibly and precisely and on promoting lifelong learning with consistent commitment to the following goals: realize sustainability; tackle social disadvantage; promote equality of opportunity; and sustain an environment that celebrates diversity and makes genuine progress toward realizing the benefits of bilingualism. Chapters 1-10 discuss the following aspects of developing a comprehensive education and lifelong learning program for Wales: (1) differences between England and Wales that necessitate different educational policies and practices; (2) solid foundations in the early years; (3) the vision of comprehensive education and lifelong learning; (4) learning and equality of opportunity; (5) progress and practitioners; (6) beyond compulsory education; (7) access and the future of higher education; and (8) outcomes. Contact addresses and a list of abbreviations are appended. The Learning Skills Development Agency's response to the proposal is also included. (MN)

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Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
The National Assembly for Wales

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The Learning Country

A Paving Document

A Comprehensive Education and Lifelong Learning Programme to 2010 in Wales

CE 079 566

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FOREWORD

Education and training are of the first importance for Wales - they liberate talent, extend opportunity, empower communities and help create wealth.

We face complex technological change and huge shifts in competitive pressures from within Europe and beyond. Many of our communities are vulnerable and disadvantaged. Our skills-base is relatively low. A great deal remains to be done to heal the significant divisions in our society - for the health and well being of everyone who lives here; to ensure that people can realise their ambitions; and to build a truly enterprising and creative culture, making the very most of our distinctively rich and diverse inheritance. These challenges are of historic significance. The consequence of not facing up to them would be threatening and bleak. Failure to match up to them cannot be an option. Above all, success depends upon a rapid acceleration in lifting our knowledge and skills-base.

We are at a turning point for education and lifelong learning in Wales. It is highly significant that the National Assembly's first major legislation and decisions were related directly to what is done in schools and to the arrangements for learners post-16. We now have legislation in place for a revised National Curriculum following on from a large-scale review taken forward specifically for Wales. Similarly we have transformed the structure of delivery and quality assurance for learning after compulsory education - not least by establishing the new National Council-ELWa. From now on, the focus must shift to making these changes work to raise standards; break down barriers to learning; lift our skills-base; and remove obstacles to effective teaching. It will mean finding innovative and radical ways of getting people across Wales involved. It will mean tackling under achievement in our most deprived communities. It will mean excellence for all.

As the responsible Minister, my vision for education and lifelong learning is that Wales should become internationally renowned as a Learning Country: a place which puts learners' interests first; offers wider access and opportunities for all; aspires to excellence across the board; and which will not settle for second best in making lifelong learning a reality. That means making the most of any opportunity that comes to hand to achieve excellent results and finding innovative and radical ways to create opportunities as well - whether they arise internationally, in the European Union, through the central government, or here in Wales.

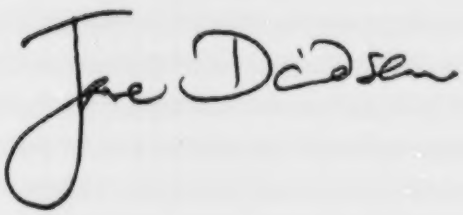
The UK Government's intention to introduce an Education Bill to Parliament in the Autumn itself presents us with a major opportunity. Indeed, it is a privilege for me to introduce this first comprehensive strategic statement on education and lifelong learning in Wales, and the first Paving Document for primary and secondary legislation in this field, to issue from the National Assembly. It demonstrates our determination to get the most from the systemic and structural changes that we have already put in place. It aims to bolster the momentum towards establishing Wales as a Learning Country. It shows how devolution can have a dramatically positive effect on shaping primary legislation at Westminster.

We share key strategic goals with our colleagues in England - but we often need to take a different route to achieve them. We shall take our own policy direction where necessary, to get the best for Wales. It's right that we put local authorities, local communities and locally determined needs and priorities at the centre of the agenda for schools, for example. Our communities want excellent local comprehensive schools for all their children. Partnership on that front is at the heart of the way we do things in Wales.

The substance of what follows deals with the steps we propose to take, in partnership with our local communities, to strengthen the foundations for learning. It celebrates the vibrancy and validity of comprehensive education, recognising the importance of schools as community resources and in building people's confidence and capacity locality by locality. It sets a new agenda supporting practitioners to adapt the way in which schools and other providers work; to tailor what is done to meet the needs of individual learners more flexibly and precisely; to handle transitions between the stages of learning more seamlessly and fruitfully; and to provide for 14-19 year olds in new and more imaginative ways, ensuring breadth as well as depth. It is also about how we must build highways for access from schools right the way through to universities - sweeping away barriers to participation in support of learning. It is about building a Wales where all our young people - not just a select few - get the best start in life; have enticing opportunities to reach their full potential; and extending entitlement to influence the decisions that affect them through new routes to participation.

Some of the things that will feature in the forthcoming Education Bill will be of special interest to England alone. In so far as they are measures that do not fit with arrangements that work well, and get good results in Wales, we intend that the Assembly will have the power not to proceed with them - and certainly not without the fullest advance consultation and rigorous examination of all the implications. Thus although the forthcoming Bill will cover both England and Wales, many of its provisions will be enabling in character and the National

Assembly will have the discretion as to the extent of their application in Wales. Policy objectives for England are being set out in a separate White Paper. This Paving Document issues specifically for Wales. I do hope you will take advantage of the invitation to comment - and that you will join with us to make Wales an unbeatable place in which to learn, and to prosper.



Jane Davidson AM
Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

THE LEARNING COUNTRY

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Paving the Way

1. In the two years since its inception, the National Assembly has instituted a massive programme of support, development and change for training and education in Wales. The programme is highly distinctive in range and scope. It is going ahead at a pace and depth unknown since the establishment of the Welsh Department of the Board of Education nearly a 100 years ago. It is timely to take stock and to set out the agenda for the next phase. This is important because the scale and reach of this agenda is perhaps even more substantial than what has gone before.

2. This **Paving Document** consults on a number of key policy directions and also on legislative proposals to give effect to them. Within the constitutional context established by the Government of Wales Act 1998 the Assembly has an important capacity to shape legislative proposals for education and training in Wales in ways that are suited directly to the country's needs. Indeed, notwithstanding the breadth of his own distinct responsibilities, the Secretary of State for Wales has a key role in informing and guiding the UK Government's approach to constructing primary legislation so that it takes account of the Assembly's proposals and requirements. Thus, although the National Assembly does not have primary legislative powers, its capacity to ensure that Westminster legislation is suited to Welsh circumstances is significant. This was illustrated by the passage of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 - over a third of which was devoted to Wales alone. The primary legislative framework generally also provides for the Assembly itself to initiate secondary legislation. This is highly significant, especially in relation to education and training. The Assembly may then choose to act, or not to act, in ways that are entirely distinctive to Wales.

3. This is both the first comprehensive strategic statement on education and lifelong learning in Wales, and the first Paving Document, for primary and secondary legislation in this field issued from the National Assembly. Its scope reflects the breadth of the portfolio of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning which embraces virtually all education and training matters. It links with the **'Plan for Wales 2001'**. Each Chapter concludes with a list of questions for consultation. Please let us have your responses **by the end of October**. The address to which they should be sent, electronically or in hard copy, is at the end of the text. We very much hope that you will take the opportunity to contribute. That will inform

decisions about policy and the powers to be taken in the context of an Education Bill that the UK Government is to introduce to Parliament in the Autumn.

Continuity and Progress

4. People in Wales have long valued worthwhile opportunities for learning and great teaching. The way in which this has been expressed has varied. By turns there have been the powerful initiatives to establish a national university; to introduce an independent schools' inspectorate early in the 20th Century; to provide Welsh medium primary and secondary schools after the second world war; to establish distinct funding councils for further and higher education; to introduce a National Curriculum for Wales; and to sustain partnership working between schools, local and central government. The establishment of the National Assembly coincides with a vastly greater recognition that training and education cannot be treated as the preserve of a minority, or an elite. The pace of technological, social and economic change makes it imperative that learning must be made accessible to all; that what is provided must aspire to, and actually deliver, excellence; and that continuous improvement should be habitual. Raising educational standards and skills levels is critical to ensuring the long term, sustainable, economic and social development of Wales.

5. Against that background we in Wales - and particularly governing bodies and practitioners - have much to be proud and confident about. For example, and most recently:

- Wales has led the field in a distinctive strategy towards **school improvement** - evidence-based; locally managed; and professionally valid. Holding this line with teachers' support, together with a constructive inspection regime; responsive strategies for literacy and numeracy; and progressive provision for initial and in-service training, has been highly effective. Pupil attainment at both primary and secondary levels has improved faster than ever before, and by comparison with England too.

- Following final decisions by the National Assembly, Wales broke the mould to impel radical **reform of post-16 education and training**. There are now bespoke arrangements in place which will transform the knowledge and skills-base within the country over the years ahead. It is a coherent structure without unnecessary institutional barriers. The National Council for Education and Training for Wales and its sister Council in ELWa, supports all post-16 learning throughout Wales. Community Consortia for Education and Training (CCETs) have a key role in knitting local partnerships together. The Education and Training Inspectorate for Wales (Estyn) applies common

disciplines for the work of inspecting virtually all training and education providers: there is no proliferation of separate inspectorates working to different routines. Careers Wales provides an all age information, advice and guidance service to common standards throughout the country. The development of services for young people will be taken forward by the statutory and voluntary sectors with local authority leadership and under the partnership-based ***Extending Entitlement***[1] agenda.

6. Yet we have also to face the fact that by comparison with other countries Wales has low economic activity rates; a significant incidence of low skills and qualifications levels - despite substantial recent progress; relatively high inactivity in the working age population; low pay and low productivity; a low proportion of GDP in high growth, high value added sectors; sharp variations in economic performance regionally; and a low number of new businesses relative to the size of population. Whilst employment policy is not devolved to the Assembly we are working closely with the Employment Service and the Benefits Agency (now Jobcentre Plus) to ensure that the Welfare Reform agenda is developed to meet the specific needs of Wales and addresses our high rates of inactivity. There remains a big challenge ahead.

Wales in Profile

- GDP per head in Wales is some 20 per cent below the UK average;
- the proportion of working age people whose highest qualification is NVQ level 4 or equivalent, or above, is some 23 per cent compared to 25 per cent in the rest of the UK;
- in 1999 Welsh hourly earnings were 12 per cent below the UK figure;
- 19 per cent of the population have no qualifications, compared to 16 per cent in the rest of the UK;
- rates of economic inactivity are at 25 per cent in Wales compared to 21 per cent across the UK.

7. The plain fact is that training and education are equally and intimately related to successful community development, social inclusion, wealth creation and personal fulfilment. There is a close synergy between the measures necessary to sustain learning and creativity, and achieving the benefits of economic growth, community enrichment and a wonderful quality of life for individuals. Innovation in the arts, sciences and technology stimulates, and is promoted by, a vigorous learning country. A culture of low skills, low qualifications, low creativity, low expectation, and low enterprise cannot survive in the face of European and international competition.

[1] 'Extending Entitlement: Supporting Young People in Wales,' issued September 2000.

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8. The Assembly's aim, therefore, is to implant a genuine momentum to lifelong learning for all our people; to unlock everyone's capacity to acquire the confidence to be adaptable and enterprising; and to make the most of the dynamic cultural and linguistic inheritance in Wales.

Developing the Learning Country

9. Our goal is for Wales to have one of the best education and lifelong learning systems in the world.

- We want Wales to be a learning country, where high quality, lifelong learning provides the skills people need to prosper in the new economy, liberates talent, extends opportunities and empowers communities.
- We want all our young people to have the best start in life, the opportunity to reach their full potential, and a clear entitlement to influence the services that affect them.
- We want to drive up standards of teaching and attainment in all our schools, valuing and supporting the teaching profession to achieve this.
- We shall ensure that the benefits of improvements are enjoyed by all, in fully comprehensive system of learning that serves all our local communities well.
- We want learning to be an every day part of working, and non-working life, in which the interest of learners come first.
- We want to strengthen the contribution of education and training to economic development as set out in the National Economic Development Strategy consultation document.

10. In all, the promotion of lifelong learning is a cardinal priority for the Assembly, and for Wales. It will be actioned, with due regard to the Assembly's consistent commitment reflected in **betterwales.com**, to:

- realise sustainability;
- tackle social disadvantage - especially in our most deprived communities;
- promote equality of opportunity; and
- sustain an environment that celebrates diversity and makes genuine progress towards realising the benefits of bilingualism.

11. With this in view, the policy development work of the Assembly's Subject Committees will bring very important results. Already there have been major studies on early years; the use of information and communications technology; the supply of school places; and the design of an Education and Training Action Plan for Wales. A review of higher education is ongoing. In turn, and under the new Partnership Agreement, Ministers have put in hand a wide range of actions which demonstrate a determination to make sustained and ever more progressive step - changes in provision and attainment across the board. Following directly from this, the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning has taken measures to:

- establish a firm **capital expenditure programme** to transform the conditions in our schools. This will amount to some £300 million over the three years to 2004 in the expectation that expenditure, of at least a similar annual rate will continue throughout the decade, to meet the **betterwales.com** target of having all schools in good physical shape and ensuring they are properly maintained, by 2010;

- provide **nursery education** to all children from the age of 3 years whose parents want it;

- reduce all **infant classes to thirty pupils** or less by September 2001 and start to bring **junior classes** down to the same level;

- promote a strategy to extend the provision of **breakfast and fruit tuck-shop** schemes to schools, along with the reintroduction of **free school milk** for all pupils at **Key Stage 1**;

- establish a strategic **policy for rural and small schools**, with a paper to the Education and Lifelong Learning (ELL) Committee in the Autumn;

- implement an all - age **basic skills** strategy to better prepare young children for learning when they begin school and reduce the numbers of children, young people and adults with low literacy and numeracy;

- pilot a **Welsh Baccalaureate** to provide the breadth and experience so critical to young people if they are to make their way in the world - and to take it in much greater numbers than currently achieve advanced academic or vocational qualifications;

- provide a strong future for **Welsh universities and other higher education institutions** by producing a 10 year strategy for adequately funded development and expansion;

- carry out an independent investigation of **student hardship**; and to

- ensure that the educational needs of **asylum seekers** receive the necessary attention, and that sufficient resources are available to meet those needs.

The Principles

12. In all of this the Minister is seeking to ensure that a number of key principles are established in ways that are irreversible. Thus the following are axiomatic.

- **High standards and expectations** and progressively improving outcomes must feature for all learners whatever their situation, and in all sectors, to achieve world - beating excellence.

- **The interests of learners override all others**. Standards, results and outcomes matter more than inputs. All sectors and providers must plan to achieve stretching but realistic targets, sharing international best practice and setting new benchmarks for quality assessment.

- **Barriers to learning must be recognised and steadily overcome** to the benefit of learners' access and participation; support for diversity and communities; and wider opportunities and option choice.

- Every encouragement must be given to ensure that academic, technical and vocational learning pathways have **parity of esteem** to boost the options available to individuals and enhance people's capacity to become adaptable and employable in the face of national and international technological change.

- Inequalities in achievement between advantaged and disadvantaged areas, groups, and individuals must be narrowed in **the interests of all**. Children facing special disadvantage and poverty of opportunity must be better provided for.

- **Innovation must be supported** consistently to focus on the future needs of the economy; to enable providers to use ICT to transform teaching and learning and to customise and refine learning experiences tailored to the needs, aspirations and potential of individuals.

- The informed **professional judgement of teachers, lecturers and trainers** must be celebrated without prejudice to the disciplines of public accountability; and with proper regard to clearing the way to unleash the capacity and expertise of practitioners.

- Policy and programme development must be undertaken on the basis of **partnership** with all those who can contribute to success using effective consultation; the least possible bureaucracy; and encouraging genuine commitment to work across organisational boundaries with partners playing to one another's strengths.

- Provision for education and lifelong learning must also reflect **wise use of money** and proposals tested at successive Assembly Budget Planning Rounds against competing priorities.

- Policy for education and training must be **evidence based**, openly reported on and evaluated; provide firm foundations for knowledge exploitation and enterprise; and give clear demonstrations of the quantitative and qualitative return on Assembly investment.

- The agenda for lifelong learning must be applied in ways that reflect the **distinctive needs and circumstances** of Wales taking full account of the functions and capacities of local government, the contributions of business, and the vital support of the voluntary sector.

The Next Steps

13. There is no doubting the major advances that have been made in Wales to improve standards and performance for all learners. Progress in schools has been hard won by headteachers, practitioners, governing bodies, local authorities, and all those who have worked, and are working, to support them - including business and the voluntary sector. Similarly the numbers of learners gaining access to courses in colleges, universities and work based training has increased markedly - along with the quality of courses and programmes - as a result of equally significant partnership efforts within, and between, those sectors.

14. However, the drive to build excellent schools together, and to realise high expectations for all pupils wherever they learn, regardless of their circumstances, simply cannot be relaxed. Nor can the momentum to lift achievement amongst young people and adults in further education (FE), higher education (HE), and training. The professional standing of practitioners or providers in education and training rests in large part on their commitment demonstrably to improve outcomes

for learners. By the same token they also need the most robust and vigorous support.

15. What follows sets out the measures we shall take to ensure that our ambition to establish Wales as a learning country, with powerful benefits for everyone who lives here, can be fulfilled. It describes the next phase of the work to deliver better outcomes in schools, colleges, universities, and work based training and to see that it is well supported. In broad terms this document deals with our intention to:

- build **stronger foundations for learning** in primary schools with a radical improvement for early years provision and support to parents (notably through complementary child care), as well as for special needs;

- ensure **better transition between primary and secondary** school so that it contributes to substantially lifting standards for, and the results achieved by, 11 to 14 year olds; fits with a push to add significant value to what is achieved between ages 7 to 11; and connects with clear agreements between schools and LEAs about outcomes and related support;

- progressively **adjust schools' working practice** so that they can operate more flexibly, innovatively and responsively to make still better use of the talents and commitment of practitioners in supporting learners; to act individually and in partnership groups as resources for communities; and to affirm the strength of comprehensive school provision in Wales;

- press ahead to **transform provision for 14 to 19 year olds**, so that within an overall curriculum entitlement, artificial barriers are broken down to meet the demands of learning in a new century. There are barriers between vocational and academic pathways; between schools and employers; between stages at which qualifications and examinations are conventionally taken; between activities in school and out of school hours; and between providers themselves;

- ensure that **better services for young people** develop coherently under the *Extending Entitlement* banner; that they respond to their needs for impartial information and support; and that their shape is increasingly determined by young people themselves;

- ensure high quality careers **information, advice and guidance** is accessible to all through the use of innovative and modern technologies;

- introduce progressive measures to **promote greater access** to lifelong learning post-16, notably through **further education** including a credit based qualification and transfer framework and new measures of financial support to students, apprentices, and trainees;

- press ahead to pursue 'Made in Wales' strategies to **tackle skills deficits** and engage business more thoroughly, sector by sector, to design learning provision in all settings;

- give still **stronger support to practitioners** through new systems of reward, recognition, and continuing professional development reflecting the outcomes that are needed to overcome weaknesses in standards and attainment in Wales;

- act to **modernise the collaborative efforts of higher education** in Wales, and between HEIs and other sectors, to widen access significantly; improve income generation; lift research activity; and exploit knowledge transfer to the benefit of the wider economy in Wales.

CHAPTER 2: SOUND FOUNDATIONS

Early Years

16. We aim to give every child a flying start. We seek to plant ambition and high expectation early on. We wish to support parents to enable this to happen. This means applying the principles established by the Assembly so that early years provision:-

- offers a development curriculum in harmony with each child's particular needs and interests;
- provides scope for all children to reach their potential and take their full place in society on the basis of equal educational opportunities;
- builds partnerships between parents, families, carers, childminders, nurseries, playgroups and schools in both the maintained and non-maintained sectors to develop 'wrap-around' care; and
- is guided and nurtured by suitably qualified practitioners able to improve standards progressively and integrate education and care effectively.

17. We have already established an Early Years Advisory Panel to help shape and inform the way in which these principles are applied - and policy developed - for the future. A detailed audit of provision will be undertaken by local education authorities in the Autumn. The Advisory Panel has also agreed that consultations should be carried out about establishing integrated Early Years Centres taking account of the work of the Childrens Task Force. Money has been set aside to enable authorities to develop proposals with a view to ensuring that a programme to establish at least one Centre can be set up in every authority in Wales by September 2002. A review of the way in which authorities plan wider children's services is also underway in the context of the consultation upon 'Children and Young People - A Framework for Partnership'[2]. The issues will be fully considered by the newly established Cabinet Sub- Committee on Children and Young People.

Early Years in Wales

- All 4 years old have access to a full-time place in a maintained school.
- Some 75 per cent of 3 year olds are in school part-time.
- As part of the Childcare Strategy - 9000 new childcare places have been funded since 1999.

[2] 'Children and Young People - A Framework for Partnership' – December 2000.

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18. We aim to ensure that a cohesive approach is adopted to childcare and nursery provision so that it is available for all three year olds whose parents want it. Integration is necessary so that what is developed is firmly in the interests of the child, and delivered at times that meet the changing practical needs of families and carers. We shall:

- **seek explicit powers** to give an appropriate legislative basis to childcare and early years development partnerships in the interests of full integration, reflecting the Assembly's discretion as to policies and priorities; and
- **consult** on the way in which that integration should be reflected not merely before compulsory schooling begins, but at Key Stage 1 as well, with due regard to advice especially commissioned from Estyn.

19. The Assembly has provisionally estimated that the required upgrade for early years will require an extra investment of £12 million annually from 2003. This has been provided for in forward budget plans. In order to make the best use of this money it will also be necessary to:

- secure more, **well qualified and trained practitioners**. New arrangements will be put in place in consultation with all providers on the basis of partnership to identify the balance of requirement in relation to demand;
- ensure that the **quality assurance and regulatory system** for integrated care and early years provision, together with out of school hours childcare, remains fully appropriate to the developing scope and nature of the setting. Estyn will seek to ensure that the regulatory burdens are 'fit for purpose', and we shall consider what changes to the overall statutory position may be needed to support them in this;
- invite the Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (SSIW) and Estyn to consider what developments in **kitemarking and quality rating schemes** might be appropriate for Wales and we shall consult - including with the Early Years Advisory Panel, the existing partnerships, and the Basic Skills Agency - on what they propose; and
- consult on the appropriateness of increasing the **supply of childcare** and early years education - by increasing the permissible range of providers including school governors and home carers.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

20. We seek excellent provision for children with special needs, whether they are assessed as needing a statement or not. We want to make sure that difficulties are spotted early. There must be a close connection between high quality early years

provision and effective intervention for children with special needs. We want these children to achieve everything that they can. High expectations are as appropriate for them as for every other child. We aim to tailor the curriculum to their needs, and to ensure that teachers are supported in challenging and stretching them. So we shall press ahead to deliver on the 'Action Programme for Wales'[3] endorsed by the Assembly and following on from the Green Paper for Wales[4] which issued prior to its inception.

21. The number of children with a statement of SEN in Wales has been broadly stable over the last five years - averaging just over 17,000. However, although the number of children newly assessed as requiring a statement has declined modestly to just over 2,000 in recent years, the proportion of new statements given to pupils under five continues to increase. Of the new statements issued last year, over 21 per cent went to pupils under five (464), compared to 8 per cent in 1994 (227). This demonstrates the importance of early identification of special needs, and of the way in which they are developing through a child's learning career.

SEN

- Budgeted expenditure for SEN in 2001-02 is £176 million – up 9.5 per cent on last year.
- The number of pupils with statements of SEN who are in mainstream schools has increased to 75 per cent - up 5 percentage points since 1990.
- The percentage educated in mainstream schools varies across LEAs from 23 to 92 per cent.
- The number of pupils with statements and having moderate learning difficulties was over 5,500 in January 2001.
- The number of pupils with statements having severe, profound or other special difficulty was over 6,000, and the number with emotional and behavioural disorders was over 1,800.
- There were over 3,000 pupils with statements having physical disabilities, including hearing and visual impairment and speech difficulties.

22. We look to improve the materials and professional development available to teachers working in the SEN field. We want to ensure that there is close monitoring of the progress of children working below age-related expectations against consistent strategies, and that schools set themselves appropriate targets to support the progress of their special needs children. We shall encourage them to benchmark their performance against other schools[5]. We shall support Estyn to develop its own inspection and monitoring arrangements,

[3] 'Shaping the Future for Special Education - an Action Programme' - October 1999.
[4] 'The BEST for Special Education' - January 1999.
[5] See 'Aiming for Excellence in Provision for Special Needs' - Estyn, July 2001.

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particularly to ensure the development of inclusive practice. We shall promote value-added measures for school performance, relevant to SEN. We shall ensure that education strategic plans properly provide for multi-agency working to link the contributions of health, education and social services to support the progress of children with special needs.

23. The SEN and Disability Act 2001 will itself lead to improved provision for children with SEN throughout Wales. Over the next two years, the Assembly will tackle the following priorities to:

- ensure that LEAs and schools are in a position to renew their policies and **procedures** for children with special needs. Support through the Grants for Education and Support for Teachers (GEST) programme will increase to over £4 million from April 2002. The Wales Advisory Group on SEN will be re-configured to assist. Estyn will conduct a project to examine the quality of services provided by LEAs;

- adopt a **strategic approach** to reduce the fragmentation of services for low incidence and high dependency disability groups. The Assembly has already examined the work of three regional pilot projects. It is the intention that they be merged and operate on an all-Wales basis from April next year. The costs will be met by the Assembly;

- devise mechanisms to enable local authorities to provide regional **resources** for children with more complex needs and difficulties; putting in place a common data set covering all relevant services; and ensuring that planning can be undertaken effectively;

- audit the scope and scale of funding and provision so that the **effectiveness of the investment** can be made more transparent. This will involve the preparation of common guidelines for authorities, amplifying the existing Code of Practice, and eliminating the substantial assessment variations between authorities about when it is appropriate for a child to have a statement, and when not;

- establish the precise extent to which the demand for **speech and other therapies** is exceeding supply; ensuring that where there are shortfalls against evident need they are overcome; and requiring local and health authorities to work together on matters of provision much more consistently than they do at present. Action will necessarily take account of the needs for practitioners in relation to both English and Welsh; and

- consult on whether it would make sense in principle for the National Assembly to have a power to enable it to establish a distinct **tribunal for SEN and educational disability rights in Wales.**

Primary Schools

24. Primary schools have won very considerable improvements in attainment for their pupils in recent years. For example targets in the Education and Training Action Plan for Wales (ETAP) relating to the numbers achieving the levels expected at the end of Key Stage 2 were met for 2000. The challenge now is to maintain momentum to reduce the percentage of pupils that do not achieve what they are capable of at 11. At the same time the goal must be to increase the percentage of teaching which is good or very good, as opposed to satisfactory. This must go hand in hand with lifting standards of teaching and learning by making the very most of new technologies - and to narrow the gap in attainment between boys and girls, which still opens up very early.

Primary Schools

- Average class sizes fell from 25.2 to 24.8 pupils from 2000 to 2001.
- 94 per cent of classes inspected by Estyn are at satisfactory standards against a 2002 target of 95 per cent.
- 48 per cent are good or very good against a 2002 target of 50 per cent.
- The 60 to 70 per cent target range for pupils aged 11 meeting level 4 or above in tests and teacher assessments was met or exceeded for Welsh, English, Maths and Science in 2000 with strong progress made through to the target range (70 to 80 per cent) for 2002.
- In general, girls continue to perform better than boys, with smaller gaps in maths and science than languages.
- 14 per cent of schools in Wales have 50 pupils or less, compared with 4 per cent in England. 33 per cent of schools in Wales have 100 pupils or less compared with 15 per cent in England.
- Nearly 20 per cent of schools have significant surplus capacity; overall, 14 per cent of places are unfilled.

25. To help support primary schools over this we shall:

- provide special grant support to **cut junior class sizes** to 30 pupils or less by Autumn 2003. In 2001-02 authorities are using £9 million of grant for the purpose - out of a total of £20 million provided for this and for tackling under-performance. Total continuing support is worth some £57 million for the two years from Spring 2002. We are pressing ahead with a view to cutting all primary class sizes to 25 or less in the Assembly's second term;
- consider whether there is a continuing need to apply national **testing arrangements** for 7 year olds - given the very high degree to which pupils meet what is expected of them then - and the possibility that the resources involved might be used differently to assist teachers to raise standards across the curriculum at that stage;

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- consult on whether, and if so how best, to integrate the existing 'Desirable Outcomes'[6] and to enable practitioners to support children's rounded progress through a proposed statutory **foundation phase** with a curriculum extending from age 3 to 7;

- sustain the strategic approach established for Wales to raise standards of **literacy and numeracy** - taking full account of the complementary programmes to lift basic skills generally; and with all such programmes in nurseries, primary schools and secondary schools, and post-16 providers obtaining the Strategy Quality Mark by 2004; and

- use the GEST programme to ensure that primary schools are able to raise achievement not only in the core subjects of the curriculum, but in all the **foundation subjects** as well.

The Transition from Primary to Secondary School

26. The evidence from Estyn's Annual Report[7] confirms that the progress pupils increasingly make at primary school is not always maintained after the move to secondary level. It is also clear that good schools and local authorities often do not stretch to become excellent. Secondary schools' inclination to let new entrants aclimatise themselves to their new settings can result in passivity or disorientation for some pupils. Assumptions about how best to bring pupils to an equivalent level may be made without rigorous attention to what pupils already know, and what skills they already have. That leads to unnecessary and de-motivating repetition and attitudes that encourage underachievement amongst pupils themselves. Overall, for the last 3 years, achievement at the expected level 5 or above at the end of Key Stage 3 has hovered at, or just below, the extreme lower end of the 60-70 per cent target range set for 2000 in Maths, Science and English.

Funding

- We have supported LEAs in achieving a 10 per cent increase in total school services budgets over 2000-01 to £1.49 billion for 2001-02.
- The cumulative increase in provision for LA education services since April 1999 is 11.56 per cent in real terms.
- Total expenditure per pupil is forecast to be up by 7 per cent to £2,955 in 2001-02, compared to £2,765 in 2000-01.
- The average budgeted spend per pupil in Wales was £2,870 in 2000-01, above every region of England except London and the Metropolitan Authorities of the West Midlands and the North West.

27. However there is clear evidence that really effective collaboration between primary and secondary schools can bring huge benefits in attainment at Key Stage

[6] 'Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning before Compulsory School Age' - ACCAC 1996.
[7] The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales 1999-2000.

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3. There are a variety of methods in use ranging from the introduction of dedicated lead practitioners in literacy or numeracy for example, to regular meetings between leadership teams; to the better use of specialist teams at KS3 itself and imaginative use of teaching staff across KS2 and 3. Whatever the method, the effect is to bridge the gap between the two settings directly to handle the transition better, and to get better results for 11 to 14 year olds.

28. Our priorities are to:

- ensure that by law all secondary and feeder primary schools form **families or consortia**, and plan in ways to make the best use of the last year of Key Stage 2 and the first and second of Key Stage 3, taking account of all children's needs whatever their gifts and talents; and providing for a positive transition for pupils as they move from primary to secondary school;
- pilot **a unique learner identifier number system** to reduce the burdens of paperwork on schools; to give practitioners much more rapid access to data on performance so as to enable them to attune their practice to meet needs more precisely; and to assist in improving the transitions at both 11 and 16;
- enable small primary schools - including those serving rural communities - to form **groups under one leadership team**, and a single governing body: aside from the potential educational, social, and other practical benefits, arrangements on these lines could themselves assist in supporting joint planning to handle pupils' transition to the secondary level better;
- provide by law for local authorities and schools to establish **protocols** for partnership agreements setting out the actions LEAs will take to support schools to raise educational standards; to set shared objectives for achievement with particular emphasis on schools that are underperforming or have evident weaknesses; and to support arrangements for handling transitions at 11 and 16;
- encourage schools to achieve quality marks that directly support self-evaluation and continuous improvement such as **IiP** and the **European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM)**;
- build pupil confidence and involvement through the establishment of **schools' councils**. Run well and linked to Local Authority Youth Fora, these too can play a part in delivering good outcomes as pupils make the transition from primary to secondary levels - for example by supporting advance visit and mentor schemes. However they have a still wider value as part of our overall agenda to ensure that young people have a right to influence directly

the decisions that affect them. The *Extending Entitlement* agenda and *Children and Young People - A Framework for Partnership* point the way. We propose to consult on best practice guidance for the establishment of schools' councils, following legislation - especially through Llais Ifanc;

- ensure that new **local plans** are produced, as proposed in A Framework for Partnership, setting out the key objectives and targets for all services that affect children and young people. We want these plans drawn up by partnerships involving relevant components of the statutory, voluntary and private sectors - and we propose that the **partnerships and plans** be given a statutory basis; and
- we are committed, more generally, to boosting the **participation** of children and young people across a range of dimensions in community life. This will at once promote individuals' attainment and development whilst also giving them the legal entitlement to design the services that affect them directly. We shall supplement the new scope for participation with a new model information resource branded Canllaw On-Line.

QUESTIONS

Early Years

1. **Do you think this agenda addresses the main weaknesses of provision?**
2. **To what extent is policy, funding, provision, and quality assurance fully joined up from your perspective?**

SEN

3. **Do you agree the priorities for action in this Chapter are the right ones?**
4. **Do you think it would make sense to establish a distinct tribunal for SEN and educational disability rights in Wales?**
5. **What further scope is there for direct service improvement for customers?**
6. **How can ICT be used to improve service provision?**

Primary Schools

7. **Do you see merit in considering an integrated foundation stage covering 3 to 7 year olds and removing testing at the end of Key Stage 1?**
8. **Is the proposed approach to transition planning likely to be fruitful?**
9. **Would you see merit in the introduction of a statutory requirement to limit junior class sizes to a specific level?**

All Schools

10. **Do you favour a requirement for agreements to be put in place between schools and their LEA? What should these cover?**
11. **Do you favour a requirement on all schools to establish schools' councils?**

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CHAPTER 3: COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING IN WALES

Introduction

29. The commitment to enable schools to build on their strengths and overcome their weaknesses is of long standing in Wales. In large measure, this finds expression in the close partnership arrangements that exist with local education authorities, echoed in the Partnership Council established by the Government of Wales Act. In general, the country is marked by approaches that seek to strike a healthy balance between ensuring that schools have the capacity to make the most of their independence, reputation and identity (so that they remain places where pupils want to be, and feel well served), and avoiding unnecessary competition in favour of mutually beneficial collaboration wherever appropriate.

30. These approaches have been based on developing effective local, non selective, comprehensive schools. They have been successful. Proportionately fewer schools have been identified as being so close to failure as to need special measures to turn them round in Wales (8), than in England (778) since May 1997. Similarly, the number of schools in which fewer than 25 per cent of pupils gain less than 5 GCSE A*-C grades is proportionately much less in Wales (10) than in England (480), and the rate at which the numbers of those schools is decreasing is faster here.

31. All maintained schools in Wales fall within the family of arrangements established under the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 that provides for a valuable range of provision, in both the English and Welsh languages. However, it is very evident that the key strategic problem facing us remains that of raising the standards of all to levels beating their previous best. There are serious problems of variation in performance and attainment between the best and least well performing schools and local education authorities.

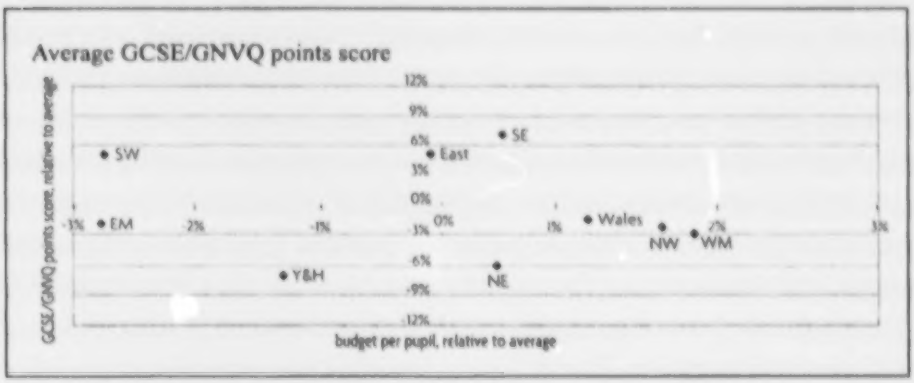
32. Data submitted to the Assembly's ELL Committee show that investment in education alone is not the key determinant of successful outcomes. Moreover, as the information on school performance within the **Communities First**[4] areas shows, there are many schools which achieve remarkable results as well as in the most deprived communities. Overall, Wales spends more per pupil head than anywhere in England except London and two Metropolitan authorities. Schools

[4] Regenerating our Most Disadvantaged Communities 'Communities First'. Second Consultation Paper - Proposals for Implementation. December 2000.

achieve outcomes that compare very well with most regions in England. We are committed to working in partnership and identifying ways of maintaining the established momentum in favour of improved standards in Wales, whilst simultaneously narrowing identified gaps in attainment.

Wales and England Regions

Comparison of relative school services spend and achievement 1998-99



(ETES: provisional data 2001)
EM = East Midlands: WM = West Midlands: SE = South East: SW = South West: NE = North East: NW = North West: Y&H = Yorkshire and Humberside

33. Together with the Wales Local Government Association (WLGA) we have established a working group involving practitioners, elected members, officers, Estyn, and a range of others - supported by commissioned research. It will examine what works in raising whole school attainment and identify action to disseminate good practice. This **'Narrowing the Gap'** Group will report in 2002. In preparation for this, we have made important strides to ensure that decisions about resource allocation at Assembly, local authority, and school level are made more transparent. Prior to the establishment of the Assembly, comprehensive and audited figures had never been available so openly and systematically.

34. We shall maintain the constitutional capacity of local authorities to reach balanced judgements about investment suited to their circumstances and which they are best placed to justify. We shall also tackle identified technical weaknesses in the system, for example, those relating to the extent to which delegated funding formulae are regularly reviewed; to ensuring the formulae reflect the needs of schools; to the allowance for social deprivation in the GEST distribution formula; and to the degree to which there are differences in provision per pupil between authorities that cannot be explained by the extra costs of rurality and other factors. We also propose to seek powers to require local authorities to establish local **fora**

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in which to consult their schools on overall funding needs and the local formula used to distribute monies between schools.

Community Focused Schools

35. Above all, we want a confident, characterful, and comprehensive school system in Wales. This is a system in which schools can develop, and make the most of their varied strengths and origins. We want to see a much closer relationship between schools and the communities they serve. We want schools to act as a community resource - not just in school hours but out of hours and in vacations as well. We see them as being integral to community capacity building - providing a base for delivering, not just education and training (with links to FE and HE institutions), but also a range of other services like family support, health and enterprise promotion. We want to see them rooted in a wide community context; capable of taking genuine pride in their achievements, and able to ensure they are publicly recognised.

36. We see schools - quite as much as other providers - as being more and more concerned to enable people to learn how to learn, as well as dedicated to transmitting knowledge, skills and understanding. We regard the disposition to learn, and the confidence to do so, as being vitally important currencies for the future. We see secondary schools, in particular, progressively moving away from rigid timetables, and even classroom based teaching, to very much more flexible modes of provision tailored to the needs of the individual learner and supported by ever strengthening distance learning and ICT.

37. We remain committed to non-selective, comprehensive school provision in Wales. This pattern of provision serves us well. Yet we are equally determined to adopt new ways of enabling schools to be successful. Some of these may involve the private sector. A number of local authorities and schools have established partnerships with schools, for example, through public-private partnerships for new school premises. Ysgol Penweddig in Ceredigion is the first such school in Wales and a number of other schemes are underway. Torfaen CBC is exploring the scope for private sector sponsorship of a new facility within the normal legal provisions for a community comprehensive school. Such schemes bringing substantial local benefit could be of considerable importance. Indeed, they may provide models for schools of the future.

38. However, in a small country, with relatively small unitary authorities, with so many distinctive features and circumstances, there would be real risks in a wholesale shift to extensive and untested measures delivered solely through the private or other sector without discrimination and without full consideration of the

implications case by case. The benefits of applying a steady and consistent approach reflecting the principles at Chapter 1 have been powerfully demonstrated for Wales. There are bound to be real reservations about anything that might substantially dislocate the productive pattern of those relationships - so long as they remain so.

39. Quite separately, whilst we are very keen to encourage schools to build on their strengths and to develop them where this is consistent with delivery of the National Curriculum, we do not propose to establish a specialist schools programme. Nonetheless, no one concerned with the needs of learners in Wales will wish to take a prejudiced or complacent view of change. There are a number of changes which are being proposed in England relating to schools and we should welcome comment on their suitability for Wales. There are proposals for legislation to:

- give defined successful schools, greater autonomy - perhaps over pay and what is taught;
- deregulate the role of governors in staff appointments and ease their burdens by limiting their responsibilities in dismissal cases to hearing appeals;
- replace a governing body where a school faces an exceptional challenge or the existing body is unable to move the school forward with a Board working with the LEA and the school's management to achieve rapid improvement;
- replace prescription over the way governors conduct their business with guidance;
- open up a wider range of options to secure school improvement in the state education sector - with, perhaps, successful local schools, voluntary bodies or the private sector supporting schools facing special measures, or contracted at the invitation of governors to deliver specific service improvement;
- refine powers that deal with shortcomings in and interventions by LEAs;
- require each LEA to establish an Admissions Forum;
- require LEAs to co-ordinate arrangements for allocating school places with a duty on foundation and voluntary aided schools to take part in such co-ordinated schemes; and
- provide for governing bodies to work together.

40. As is the case in England, we remain entirely committed to a universal, publicly funded, publicly accountable education system, free at the point of delivery. However, insofar as these new measures feature in forthcoming primary

legislation and do not fit with arrangements that work well and get good results in Wales, we intend that the Assembly will have the power not to proceed with them - and certainly not without the fullest advance consultation and rigorous examination of all the implications. Thus, although the forthcoming Education Bill will cover both England and Wales, many of its provisions will be enabling in character and the National Assembly will have the discretion as to the extent of their application to Wales.

Secondary Schools and Performance

41. Demanding targets have long been in place for achievement at age 14 in Wales. However, there are clear indications that progress towards improving attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 has reached a plateau. It is plain that a great deal more needs to be done to support teachers in raising standards in the core subjects, and in enriching the experience of school for pupils aged 11-14. This is the age at which any pupils at risk of disaffection who find school unrewarding, can be lost. However, we do not consider that a common or mandatory approach to literacy, numeracy, and standards in other subjects more generally is appropriate in Wales. We intend that a team of experienced practitioners should be brought together with colleagues from Estyn and the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC) to develop suitable guidance for the different settings in Wales.

Secondary Schools

- Number of secondary schools with less than 25 per cent of pupils achieving 5 or more A* - C or equivalent has fallen from 27 in 1996 to 10 in 2000 – the target for 2002 being zero.
- Percentage of lessons assessed by Estyn as good or very good is now above 50 per cent.
- The percentage achieving 5 GCSE A* - C grades or equivalent is now on a par with England at 49 per cent.
- 85 per cent of pupils achieve 5 GCSE grades A* - G or equivalent against a target of 90 per cent by 2002.
- 36 per cent of pupils achieve GCSE A* - C grades in the core subjects against a target range of 40 – 60 per cent by 2002.

42. We expect that this will be used in collaboration with local authorities so that the best possible return can be gained from the balance of the specific grant which is being made available this year and for the next two to help reduce primary class sizes; tackle the problems of under-performing schools; and raise standards across the board at Key Stage 3. Local authorities are using £9 million in 2001-02 to

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lift standards at Key Stage 3 and £2 million to work with under-performing schools. We shall ensure that GEST is deployed to provide teachers with excellent new materials and complementary continuing professional development. It will also be used to enable all teachers, whatever their subject, to support improvements in literacy and numeracy; strengthen practitioners' skills in these fields; improve assessment; and promote pupils' reasoning capabilities. We shall ensure that part of this is used to network good practice throughout Wales. We will also consider whether additional opportunities for In Service Education and Training (INSET) should be targetted specifically at maintaining the momentum improvement at Key Stage 2; raising standards at Key Stage 3 and promoting innovation for this and other purposes more widely.

Children 'looked-after'

- There were 3,200 children looked-after in Wales, in March 1999.
- Over 75 per cent of looked-after children leave formal education with no qualificiations.
- Only 3 per cent have five or more GCSE A*-C grades.
- Less than 0.3 per cent go on to FE.

43. At the same time we shall provide assistance for schools to deal with poor pupil behaviour; to act on the principles of equal opportunity and diversity; to tackle disaffection; and to increase qualification entries and reduce absenteeism. We propose to examine the extent to which Estyn has adequate powers to inspect provision for children educated otherwise than at school to ensure that, for example, children in hospital get a good deal educationally. We also want to raise the attainments of 'children looked after'. We shall encourage LAs to act on the recommendations of the joint SSIW/Estyn study[9] published in July. We shall promote

Attainments

- Number of 15 year-olds leaving full-time education without a recognised qualification was 1226 in 2000, down from 1320 in 1999.
- On average 6 per cent of 15 year-olds were not entered for any GCSE in 2000 – down 2 per cent on 1997. The range by LEA extends from 2 to 11 per cent.
- The percentage attainment gap between boys and girls - 5 GCSE A* - C or equivalent has averaged 11 per cent over the last 4 years.
- The percentage of half-day sessions missed by pupils of compulsory school age at secondary school has averaged 10 per cent over the last 4 years.
- In 2000 the percentage of pupils reaching the level expected at Key Stage 3, or beyond, in non core subjects varied by subject between 40 per cent and 66 per cent; for PE, Art and Music the range was from 67 to 76 per cent.

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collaborative working; include children looked after not in full-time education; and apply new information systems to monitor progress towards meeting learning objectives. By giving this consistent attention, we aim to ensure that schools secure continuing improvements in standards, and achieve still more testing targets between 2004 and 2010.

44. The education service cannot achieve better standards for the least advantaged pupils on its own. Thus the **Children First** programme aims to transform the management and delivery of services and outcomes for children in need. Central to the aims of the programme is the objective to raise the educational standards of looked-after children, for example. The success of *Children First* is dependent upon the local authority acting as a corporate parent and taking the same interest as any other parent in the upbringing of the children it looks after. Joining up with other services and the voluntary sector is critical - and funding for the purpose will be made available through *Children First, The Children and Youth Partnership Fund* and in support of *Extending Entitlement*. In total, and inclusive of funding supported by GEST, local authority youth services and Careers Wales, some £60 million will be available to complement the work of the education service next year alone.

Conduct and Citizenship

45. What pupils learn, and how they are encouraged to behave in school, has a major bearing on the way they act as citizens and thus impact upon society as a whole. Estyn confirms that schools are open, positive and highly productive places. There is much evidence that the Assembly's guidance - 'Pupil Support and Social Inclusion'[10] - is being acted on. Many schools are providing alternative curricula and innovative learning programmes to re-engage disaffected pupils, who are often boys, notably in years 10 and 11. School Development Plans and LEA Education Strategic Plans include measures and targets to improve behaviour, reduce exclusions, and increase attendance. Youth Access and the Youth Gateway programmes are having beneficial results for children most at risk of developing anti-social behaviour and the *Extending Entitlement* agenda will itself make a substantive contribution for the future.

46. Nonetheless a significant number of Estyn reports refer to very challenging behaviour from a small minority of pupils. That has a massive impact on the learning and life chances of their peers, as well as their own. The trends are difficult to establish. New reporting requirements are leading to better data collection on

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[9] 'Education Provision for Looked After Children' July 2001.
[10] 'Pupil Support and Social Inclusion'. National Assembly for Wales Circular 3/99.

violence but, another two years will be needed to assess the information reliably, and more work needs to be done to ensure a common approach to data collection across Wales. Whatever the level of incidence, violence and bad behaviour from pupils, or indeed from parents, is clearly anathema - and we shall support appropriate legislative adjustment to tackle it.

47. There is no doubt that the challenges adults face can often make it extremely difficult for them to be consistent in guiding the behaviour of their own children - who are themselves more questioning and testing. None of that excuses instances of threatening parental behaviour towards pupils and teachers. As a matter of policy we shall give priority to progressive measures aimed at preventing problems arising in the first place. However, we shall also consider the scope for extending Parenting Orders where parents fail to support a school in controlling their child's behaviour at school. We shall examine what extra help schools need to take action - through the courts if need be - where parents are themselves abusive and violent. Schools need support to maintain orderly learning - and they need the full backing of governors, parents, carers and authorities to do so, within the law. Accordingly we shall use GEST to target support for:

- secondary schools with serious problems of poor behaviour, low attendance, and low attainment;
- early intervention to help young children who have problems concentrating and co-operating;
- extending training for practitioners in behaviour and conflict management; and
- encouraging parents to take responsibility for their children's conduct;

48. In the last resort schools must have the ability to exclude a very badly behaved pupil permanently. This is no panacea. It is very difficult to strike a sound balance between the risks to the orderliness necessary for pupils' learning that arise from keeping a badly behaved child in school, and the socially costly and personally damaging effects of exclusion. Avoiding the destructive consequences that follow from a child's withdrawal from education is hugely demanding.

49. In order to draw systematic attention to the techniques for dealing with this serious problem, the Assembly set a target for the reduction of permanent exclusions by a third. In addition it passed regulations on dual registration so that schools' attendance data could be presented accurately. The exclusion target is on course to be met. We believe that a broader range of approaches to handling bad behaviour has followed too. The application of good practice in the use of Pupil Referral Units; planning for re-integration into mainstream and special schools;

home tuition; Education Social Work Service and voluntary sector support, is now well enough established to justify moving from a single exclusion target to focus attention in new directions.

50. GEST funding to tackle the social disadvantage linked to bad behaviour amounts to £10 million for 2001-02. It is up to schools and LEAs to decide how to use this best locally. The alternatives being developed must not be reduced to a range of indifferent dumping grounds. Where full time provision is needed for pupils out of school it must be fit for purpose and high quality. However, for the immediate future our priorities will be to:

- hold a major **conference** in the Autumn on schools and pupil behaviour; to review the current best practice, and identify the implications for policy and funding in Wales;
- ensure that all **pupils excluded** for more than three weeks receive appropriate full time education from September 2002;
- **research** the extent to which schools are applying serial short term exclusions in circumstances where there is an insufficiently broad range of alternatives to be sure that an excluded child is re-directed fruitfully;
- **explore** the applicability of extending the Youth Access Initiative (now part of the Children and Youth Partnership Fund), the Youth Work in Schools Partnership Programme and Youth Gateway-type approaches in schools;
- **support** curriculum development, staff training, specialist pastoral care, re-integration planning; and the professional development of ESWS staff;
- emphasise the promotion of **good practice**, and preventing the habits of bad behaviour becoming ingrained, as opposed to dealing solely with their manifestations - ensuring that those at risk of dropping out of school and badly misbehaved are given priority attention and alternative opportunities through the partnership arrangements instituted under Extending Entitlement;
- **publish new guidance** on the role of governors in handling appeals against exclusion so that decisions are fully informed by practitioner advice; and
- following the national conference in the Autumn, **issue new guidance** for governors and headteachers on handling complaints about teachers' conduct in dealing with unruly pupils, and any resulting disciplinary action, and consider the possible usefulness of instituting an independent function to ensure that the relevant processes are handled supportively, appropriately, and in good time.

The 14 - 19 Phase

51. There are perceived barriers to learning in the sharp distinction between compulsory schooling pre-16 and opportunities for training and education post-16. These bear on what qualifications and examinations are taken and when; on the attractiveness of vocational as opposed to academic pathways; on what is done in school, out of hours or in other settings; and on the scope for learning how to learn. These barriers need to be overcome. We propose to:

- introduce a requirement that schools plan much more systematically for handling **the transition at 16** in concert with other local post-16 learning providers, Careers Wales and the National Council - ELWa;
- seek the **legislative changes** that should be made to secure operational effectiveness - not least to ensure that schools have the flexibility they need to offer pupils a significant degree of subject choice and within an overall curriculum entitlement, strong vocational pathways complementing the academic ones;
- provide the support to **tailor opportunities** to meet each young person's aptitudes, abilities and preferences more precisely; to give the most able the chance to advance at a rate sensitive to their own maturation; and to deliver a wider range of options about where people can learn;
- establish a clearer **statutory framework** for PSE and work related education;
- permit pupils to mix academic and vocational qualifications and work based options, so applying the principle of **parity of esteem** between academic and vocational pathways;
- promote **breadth** of experience post-16, sustaining the key features of the Qualifications for Success reforms - learning the lessons for workload and rules of combination for the Welsh Baccalaureate;
- ensure that the **credit based qualification and transfer framework** is applied in schools as in every other setting; and
- seek legislation to extend Estyn's remit to include **area inspections** of 14-16 provision so as to assess the coherence of learning pre and post 16 throughout Wales.

52. The key consideration here is that it is no longer self-evident that all pupils should move through secondary school at the same pace, or that 16 is the principal break point in their development. Some who are put off by school may need a new

and innovative stimulus to build their skills and confidence - in school or beyond. Others may need to broaden or deepen their studies in language learning for example, or, to spend more time on vocational options, or to move on to advanced study having taken GCSE early. In addition the lessons about what teaching styles and contexts work best for pupils with different needs should be applied flexibly to help more pupils succeed.

53. A great deal is already being done to make the qualification framework more flexible and adaptable. Modularity with credits; new qualifications like the GCSEs in vocational studies, AS, A and vocational A levels; National Traineeships and Modern Apprenticeships, all play a part. So too does the experience of applying ACCAC's new work related education framework and guidance. All of this is essential to opening up access routes to FE, HE and work-related training in the much greater numbers essential for the future. However there is more to do. We shall:

- ensure that the development of the **Welsh Baccalaureate** takes full account of the importance of providing a seamless opportunity for candidates to prepare for the new qualification before 16;
- invite ACCAC to check that there remains a satisfactory inter-relationship between the **design of tests** and teacher assessments at KS3, and the GCSEs or vocational equivalents that follow;
- consider the measures required under the **Entrepreneurship Action Plan** for Wales to enrich learners' experience especially in the 14-19 phase;
- improve the quality and relevance of **work experience** as part of an improved approach to vocational learning;
- build on the work of the **Education for Sustainable Development** Panel;
- invite ACCAC to bring forward advice on possible options for increasing the flexibility available to schools through **disapplication of the National Curriculum**. This will take account of the different shape and option structure at Key Stage 4 in Wales, as compared to that in England. It will also cover the potential usefulness of reaching back to disapply at Key Stage 3 in certain cases to support progress at 14-19; and
- **consult** in 2002 on the development of policy in the 14-19 field with all stakeholders.

Building Supportive Environments

54. We want to ensure that unnecessary **bureaucratic burdens** are removed to free up time for teaching and learning. The Assembly has approved the report of the recently completed bureaucratic burdens project. The report contains an action plan which we are implementing. It is being taken into account as part of a study of teachers' workloads in England and Wales commissioned by DfES.

55. At the same time we want to see **families** supported during and outside the school day. Where this requires childcare there is a strong case for schools having the legislative powers to provide it if they choose. With careful management and the responsible involvement of professional staff this could also extend the life of the school to embrace breakfast clubs and a wide range of out of school hours, cultural and sporting activities. We believe that there should be a prospectus of such activities for every child at school in Wales, possibly incentive or credit based, covering the vacation period also.

56. We shall:

- publish a **code of practice** in the coming academic year on making the most of out of school activities - including information on a range of demonstration projects being funded by the Assembly;
- take forward a number of the recommendations in the **PE and School Taskforce Report** - including the establishment of curriculum development centres;
- ensure that the £48.7 million being made available for PE and sport in Wales through the New Opportunities Fund, complements the efforts of schools, LEAs and the Sports Council for Wales to promote sport and **healthy lifestyles** throughout the country;
- commission Estyn to conduct a survey of **arts** provision covering Key Stages 2 and 3, and consider how best arts and creative enterprise can feature in extra curricular activities for young people;
- roll the Music Development Fund forward, and consider the establishment of an arts and music fund for **young people** as resources become available;
- make the most of **free access** to National Museums and Galleries of Wales, the Culture-On-Line project being led by the National Library of Wales, and the work of Techniquest; and

- require **Careers Wales** to make contact with the creative industries to ensure that access to the associated career information and work experience opportunities are made widely available.

Recognising Success and Avoiding Failure

57. **Performance tables** featuring information on individual schools were introduced at a time when there was relatively little information available to practitioners, or indeed to parents, about achievement. Ten years on the situation is very different. There is much more data available, and practitioners are considerably more skilled in using it for the improvement of teaching and learning over time. It is essential that individual schools in Wales make performance information available to parents on a valid basis common to all. This is the information that teachers use year on year and they are best placed to put it into the broader context of the life of the school in their discussions with parents themselves. There is no reason why parents shouldn't be encouraged to appreciate the overall performance of the whole school year on year - setting measurable results against a still wider range of achievements in ways that boost, rather than diminish, local community confidence. Parents are interested in the performance of the school to which their child is going, or is already placed. The publication of booklets featuring schools across the whole of Wales is of little relevance to them. Assessments of what young people are achieving are also becoming increasingly sophisticated. So, following consultation, the ELL Minister has decided to discontinue the publication of these booklets and to publish aggregate data at LEA level. Subject to further development work this material will be supplemented in due course by value added data where that can give a fully satisfactory view of individual schools' performance.

58. In addition Estyn has already begun consultations on establishing a **common inspection framework** across the whole range of its functions, on how best to embed self-evaluation and its inspection; and the extent to which inspections should concentrate on those that are performing least well. In principle the introduction of a 'lighter touch' for all, and selectivity in inspections, accompanied by rigorous self evaluation has much to commend it. Proposals on that model were made a very few years ago for Wales, but were hesitantly received. Estyn will be urging that the advantages be reconsidered well in advance of establishing a common inspection cycle for all relevant providers within the next 3 years. Meantime, the ELL Minister has invited Estyn to produce a biannual compendium of best practice that it has identified in the course of all its studies and inspections to encourage networks of practitioners to make use of it, and to ensure that the excellence achieved in specific settings is celebrated publicly. This will complement the continuing School Improvement Index published annually by ACCAC.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree that the Assembly should not establish a specialist schools programme, - and should be cautious about changing the present governance regime, engaging contract partners, and giving autonomy to successful schools?
2. Do you agree that the Assembly should encourage innovative developments in schools without changing the present framework of school provision in Wales?
3. Are the proposals for the 14-19 phase appropriate?
4 Does it make sense to rely on teachers' professional judgement in raising standards at KS 3 within a rigorous framework of guidance for Wales, rather than mandatory strategies?
5. Is the agenda for improving transitions at 11 and 16 well founded?
6. Is the approach in this chapter towards conduct in school sound?
7. How do you think the concept of schools as community resources should be developed – and how could learning be improved locally using this model?

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CHAPTER 4: LEARNING AND EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN WALES

Opportunity for All

59. The Government of Wales Act lays a distinct and special responsibility upon the National Assembly over the pursuit of equal opportunities. Unconscious institutional and other barriers to learning must be progressively removed. We can build on strengths - for example in the approach that ACCAC has taken towards the development of the National Curriculum in Wales; Estyn's policy on inspection frameworks; and the corresponding efforts of exemplar partnerships between local authorities and other statutory and voluntary services. The Equal Opportunities Commission for Wales has itself been funded to produce guidance for schools. For the way ahead we intend to:

- implement the Ministerially endorsed recommendations of the Assembly's Equal Opportunities Committee Report on the measures to be taken in the education system in Wales to **combat racism** - and the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 as they apply to the education and training sectors in Wales;
- press ahead with a comprehensive and regular survey of the numbers and attainments of **pupils from black and ethnic minority communities** in Wales so that where there are evident patterns of under achievement, resources can be better deployed to deal with them - against soundly based target-setting for groups at risk of under achievement;
- provide support for schools, senior managers and practitioners over setting **high expectations and attainment targets** for ethnic minority pupils from the annual GEST programme, and for those whose first language is neither English nor Welsh and need additional support to make progress at school;
- provide additional financial assistance to those authorities in Wales that either are, or are likely to become, hosts for **refugees and asylum seekers** notably following the conflicts in Eastern Europe;
- ensure that local authorities work with schools to enable them to meet the requirements of the SEN and Disability Act 2001 to provide **access for disabled children and young people** - through school organisation plans and programmes for capital investment. At the same time ELWa will be remitted to work with post-16 training and education providers, especially those in the further and higher education sectors, to meet the requirements of the Act;

- focus the attention of governing bodies for schools, colleges and universities, upon the importance of adopting an open and inclusive approach to the construction of their own memberships, and tackle **gender imbalances** within their governing bodies and staff teams. Higher education institutions will be encouraged to undertake pilot equal pay reviews in this financial year, following EOC guidelines;

- continue to monitor the relative performance of **boys and girls** against targets set in the Education and Training Action Plan, and consult practitioners on how best to deal with disparities in attainment for the longer term; open up discussion with education and training bodies to test the process of 'engendering' budgets; and

- enable **ACCAC** to provide guidance on the scope within the National Curriculum for Wales for promoting equal opportunities and the understanding of diversity.

Learning In Welsh

60. The ELL Committee is shortly to undertake a policy examination of the Welsh Language as it bears upon education and training. It will do so in order to contribute to a wider study being undertaken by the Culture Committee on policy towards the language for the future. As regards schools, the numbers of pupils being taught in designated Welsh medium settings have grown a little faster over the last 10 years than the general increase in pupil numbers.

Welsh Medium Schools

- At January 2000 the combined capacity of Welsh medium primary schools was 55,000 – 18 per cent of primary capacity.
- Class sizes are in general lower in Welsh than in English medium primary schools.
- Nearly 23 per cent of secondary schools use Welsh as the medium of instruction for at least half their foundation subjects.
- The number of such schools has grown from 44 –52 in the last decade.
- 18 per cent of secondary pupils attend these schools – 15 per cent 10 years ago: 14 per cent study Welsh first language – 11.7 per cent a decade ago.

61. Responsibility for planning and providing school places rests with LEAs. They have two key planning documents. The Welsh Education Scheme which sets out the authority's policy for the development of Welsh medium education; and its annually updated School Organisation Plan (SOP) which deals with the planning of all school places, including places in Welsh medium schools. Although demand for Welsh medium education is growing, the overall school population is shrinking and will continue to do so for the rest of the decade.

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Provision for Welsh medium education has to be managed as part of each authority's strategy for balancing supply and demand for school places.

62. The SOP is designed to ensure that authorities think systematically about the effective use of resources. Each plan covers a 5 year forward period and Authorities must show how they are planning their provision for Welsh medium education alongside that for all other types of school. Schemes required by the Welsh Language Board serve complementary purposes.

63. For those educated through the medium of Welsh at school, opportunities to progress in the same medium to further or higher education or workbased training are patchy and generally slight. Accordingly, ELWa will be considering the possibilities for strengthening progression pathways on a well researched basis. It will work in concert with local authorities, institutions and training providers via Community Consortia. Particular attention will be given to the position of Welsh medium schools with small sixth forms (which perhaps serve localities very distant from other post-16 providers in any event) to get the most from the emerging partnership arrangements post-16. Through ACCAC, support is being provided for Welsh medium qualifications - for A Level, GCSE and CoEA specifications and examinations. ACCAC also provides support for the translation of GNVQ and vocational A level specifications and assessment, materials and funds translation of the Key Skills Tests. The Assembly also supports a range of work to improve the availability of NVQs in Welsh.

64. More than 20,000 students enrol each year on Welsh for Adults courses funded by the National Council - ELWa. These courses take place in both further and higher education institutions. Many secure additional funding via third party arrangements with LEAs and specialist organisations. Co-ordination of Welsh for Adults provision at all levels is achieved through 8 consortia established in 1994. The HEFCW provides extra funding to HE institutions for Welsh medium provision to underpin their plans to support Welsh medium provision on an institution wide basis. In academic year 1999/2000 just over 2,900 students enrolled with HE institutions in Wales received any teaching in Welsh. About half of these students were enrolled on teacher training courses.

65. More generally, the Assembly has contributed to the cost of setting up the Welsh language Cyswllt Dysgu/learndirect website. This Ufi linked service is a growing source of distance learning which can be accessed at learning centres, for work place training, or at home. Learning materials are being made available in Welsh progressively. The initial priorities relate to IT skills; basic literacy and numeracy; skills for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs); and the skills needs of the multi media, retail, automotive, and environmental services. The Wales

Digital College represents a complementary development. This fully bilingual service, using digital TV, began broadcasting in November last year.

66. For the way ahead we shall:

- give thorough consideration to the recommendations of the ELL Committee's examination of **policy towards the Welsh language** in relation to education and training;
- review the funding of Welsh medium **early years provision** once the outcome of an ongoing audit is known, and an assessment of future demand has been completed;
- encourage **schools and LEAs** to act on the findings of Estyn's study of Y Curriculwm Cymreig published in July[11];
- seek to improve the coherence between school organisation **plans** and related Welsh education schemes taking the advice of the Welsh Language Board (WLB) and the Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW);
- initiate further research to assess the sustainable balance between **demand and supply** for Welsh medium provision, through ELWa;
- analyse LEA asset management plans as these become available to identify whether the **condition of Welsh medium schools** is significantly different to the condition of other schools in Wales;
- consider what evidence exists on the relative success of different approaches to **immersion language learning** including their application where children are introduced to Welsh medium settings between 5 and 7, or at age 11;
- strengthen links between **Mentrau Iaith** and local schools, with the help of the WLB;
- consider proposals from the **University Board**[12] for the progressive development of Welsh medium teaching within HE within the context of the ELL Committee's review of higher education;
- support the network of Welsh medium **NVQ practitioners** throughout Wales; and
- encourage networks of **employers** to work with schools and communities to demonstrate the demand for Welsh language skills amongst employers in different sectors in Wales.

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[11] 'The Welsh Dimension of the Curriculum in Wales: Good Practice in Teaching and Learning'.
[12] The University Board for Welsh Medium Teaching of the University of Wales.

ICT

67. It is vital that the new technologies are used to open up opportunities for learning equitably. The strategic framework Cymru Arlein[13] specifically aims to establish Wales as a place where local communities actively use ICT to remove physical, geographic and linguistic barriers, and to combat social exclusion. A digital divide is completely unacceptable. We want to ensure that everyone has the skills and understanding to participate in, and benefit from, the information age. Investment from the New Opportunities Fund of nearly £27 million in Wales, is putting all public libraries on-line; digitising learning materials, and training teachers, school librarians and public librarians[14]. That is complemented by a £75 million programme to develop ICT in schools, further and higher education, and other lifelong learning settings. The new technologies - from interactive whiteboards to innovative software - offer tools for teaching and learning of real importance. We shall build the profile of e-learning and:

- encourage the development of essential **ICT skills** throughout local communities - supporting the accreditation of accessible learning centres in schools, colleges and more widely, not least to support new ways of enabling people to learn, and to use, Welsh;

- improve **ICT facilities** throughout training and education. The investment in hardware and connectivity through GEST means we shall meet the National Grid for Learning target of connecting all schools to the internet by 2002. It has also improved the pupil:computer ratio in both primary and secondary schools. For the 3 years from April 2001 we shall be making provision of £24 million for ICT facilities in schools, and better training opportunities for teachers;

- make ICT more accessible to learners of all ages through the establishment of **ICT Learning Centres** in school and community settings. The ICT for Learning Strategy will provide new ICT facilities for school pupils and adult learners in over 400 locations across Wales from September 2001 as well as supporting local projects to extend access to ICT in Communities First areas. We shall also be providing funding for pilot projects to explore the benefits of e-Learning Foundations in Wales;

- encourage the development of **bilingual educational and training materials** relevant to Wales. ICT opens up access to an ever increasing range of classroom materials and content. More needs to be done to exploit the good work being undertaken at local level and generate materials which are not yet being made more widely available electronically, as well as to develop digital resources to support the National Curriculum in Wales;

[13] 'Cymru Ar-lein: Online for a Better Wales' July 2001.
[14] See 'Report on Library and Information Matters 1999 and 2000' - National Assembly for Wales, July 2001.

- support the complementary and coherent development of the **UfI in Wales**, **learndirect** and the **Digital College** to help learners learn from one another and enable them to access learning in places and at times convenient to them whether at home, in the community or in the workplace; and
- increase the number of people with **higher level ICT skills**, and keep them in Wales. ELWa will establish an expert group to advise the National Assembly and its partners on the key actions to be taken in this field over the next decade.

68. The Subject Committee's ongoing review of higher education is already examining the implications of e-learning within the sector, and to support partnerships with FE and other providers to strengthen access to HE. For schools, the ELL Minister has already indicated that she will be implementing the three principal recommendations of the ELL Committee's report on ICT in Education. This involves the establishment of an ICT Advisory Panel to provide robust advice on policy development and delivery; a Task Force to map out a strategy for ICT in Wales, including better approaches to procurement; and a National Grid for Learning Cymru team to identify and develop electronically based material in both languages and support the development of the Curriculum Cymreig. In all, access to ICT can provide a highway for learning unmatched by the pathways that have gone before. With that in mind the ELL Minister proposes to establish an informal **e-learning advisory panel** covering all the elements of her portfolio with a view to sustaining the momentum of improvement, and a more strategic approach for the future.

QUESTIONS

1. **How far does GEST work to support equality of opportunity from your perspective?**
2. **Should data on gender imbalances and facilities for disabled learners, be published in the annual reports of schools, colleges and universities?**
3. **Are there specific barriers to learning in Wales for people from black and ethnic minority communities?**
4. **How far could e-learning be developed to support Welsh language course provision?**
5. **In your view what is the principal priority for the effective development and well used supply of lifelong learning provision through the medium of Welsh?**
6. **Do you support the approach to ICT development set out here?**
7. **What gaps in coverage should be given priority so as to bridge the digital divide?**

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CHAPTER 5: PROGRESS AND PRACTITIONERS

Supporting change

69. Regardless of institutional setting, we want to establish Wales as an outstanding place in which to teach and develop professionally, as well as to learn. The increased level of attainment within all sectors in recent years and the higher participation rates post-16 clearly demonstrates the substantial achievements of leaders and practitioners in schools, colleges and universities throughout Wales. Yet the professional impetus to secure still greater improvements in learners' progress, standards, and outcomes is critically necessary if people's life chances, and our ambitions for Wales, are to be fulfilled.

Context

- The total number of teachers in service in January 2001 was almost 28,700 fte, 400 more than the year before.
- The number of teacher vacancies in nursery, primary, and secondary schools was 99 in 2001.
- From January 2000 to January 2001, the number of pupils per teacher fell in primary schools from 21.9 to 21.5; 16.7 to 16.6 in secondary schools.
- Average class sizes in secondary schools increased from 21.0 to 21.3 in the same period.
- 11 per cent of places in secondary schools are unfilled.
- The number of pupils entitled to free school meals fell from 21.6 in 1998 to 19.5 in 2001.
- Primary school numbers are projected to fall 11 per cent by the end of the decade – secondary school numbers by 8 per cent - reflecting declining birth rates.

70. We also recognise that legitimate public expectation about continuous improvement must be accompanied by sensitive practical support and the sustained promotion of practitioners' professional standing. This process must be informed by open and publicly available information about learners' achievements. We shall keep teacher numbers under close examination taking account of reductions in the sizes of classes in Wales and of indications that the birth rate is declining more rapidly than in England. Primary classroom school teacher vacancies remain very low, under 15 in each of the last 3 years. Clearly we shall need teachers who can get the best out

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of support staff in various skill mixes - supported by appropriate and complementary staff development as well.

71. Overall we intend to provide a distinctive 'Made in Wales' framework of continuous development for teachers. This must be evidence-based, locally supported and capable of commanding international recognition. It must range from initial teacher training through to development opportunities for heads and aspiring heads. A comprehensive approach to attracting new practitioners, developing existing ones, and ensuring that there are good opportunities in place to generate effective leadership for all training and education settings, is essential.

72. Excellent school leadership is vital to raising pupil achievement. To support this critical success factor we have put in place a National Headship Development Programme providing training for aspiring headteachers, guidance for newly appointed heads and a challenge for headteachers with several years experience. We are also introducing an improved National Professional Qualification for Headship which all aspiring heads are encouraged to undertake. Headteachers starting their first leadership posts in September 2001 will be supported by a Professional Headship Induction Programme unique to Wales. Since early this year, experienced heads have been able to refresh their own leadership skills taking account of their schools' needs. They do this through the Leadership Programme for Serving Heads which begins with 360° feedback - from staff, and possibly governors, parents and pupils – and leads on to a clear action plan. Links with the National College for School Leadership will include a pilot of an on-line community for newly appointed headteachers, associateships and fellowships.

73. The reward structure for teachers has also been transformed. It remains important that initial teacher training, and other routes into the profession attract high quality applicants in good times or bad. Amongst other things, training incentives are now offered to all those who undertake postgraduate initial teacher training - and these can be worth up to £10,000 for teachers of shortage subjects. The result is that postgraduate applications have increased; the number of teachers in post has continued the upward trend noted since 1998; and the vacancy rate in Wales is low - at no more than 0.4 per cent. The introduction of new threshold pay arrangements means that good experienced teachers have access to a pay scale of up to £31,000 - and the maximum of the leadership group pay scale has risen by 50 per cent.

74. The proposal for a distinctive performance management scheme for teachers in Wales has been well received. It will provide for a consistent approach to setting objectives; getting regular feedback; and structuring professional development. To

complement general support through GEST - for example in relation to curriculum changes or whole school development, continuing professional development (CPD) will increasingly be tailored to individual needs. The General Teaching Council for Wales has made an excellent start. We believe that its open and consultative disposition; its approach to providing independent advice; together with its efficient action to set up the first ever professional register for teachers, has been well received throughout Wales. Accordingly, the ELL Minister recently announced an allocation of £1.5 million to the General Teaching Council for Wales to pilot, and arrange for the evaluation of, a range of individual CPD programmes. These will include secondments, bursaries, and opportunities for teachers to share good classroom practice.

Development:

- Around £1.5 million has been invested by the Assembly in setting up the General Teaching Council for Wales on 1 September 2000. The Assembly is providing a further £0.5 million so that the registration fee to teachers is not introduced until 1 April 2002.
- The National Assembly has provided funding to meet increased pay for teachers with new teachers starting at at least £16,038 per annum and teachers passing the threshold earning £26,919 per annum.
- Initial teacher training grants have been extended to postgraduate primary teacher trainees. Up to £10,000 is available for those entering to teach secondary shortage subjects.
- £1.5 million identified for GTC(W) to pilot and evaluate continuing professional development for teachers.
- 350 are undertaking the National Professional Qualification for Headship; 175 have already obtained the qualification.
- 250 headteachers have already participated in the Leadership Programme for Serving Heads.

75. For further education, the National Council - ELWa operates a Governance Management and Development Programme aimed at raising the standards of governing and managing further education institutions. Institutions themselves, through Fforwm (the Association of FE colleges in Wales), DYSG (the Learning and Skills Development Agency in Wales) and the FE National Training Organisation, conduct in-service training for practitioners and support staff. We shall continue to support these programmes through the Assembly's investment of over £1 billion in the National Council - ELWa during the period 2001-04. In addition, from September, allowances of up to £6,000 per annum will be available to postgraduates taking a full-time PGCE (FE) course.

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76. Taken overall, the evidence base for policy and professional development will be greatly strengthened by the ESRC's Teaching and Learning Research Programme, which aims to promote high quality research on education, focused on improving outcomes and designed to be relevant to the practice of teaching and learning. The Assembly is contributing towards the £13 million that has been allocated to the first two phases of the ESRC programme, running from 1998-2006. A number of schools in Cardiff are involved in the fieldwork for one project, and the School of Social Sciences at Cardiff University was awarded nearly £0.5 million to oversee a network to develop and share best research practice. Hitherto, most of the funded projects have been concerned with teaching and learning up to age 16 but, a further sum of at least £10 million is being allocated to a third phase, which will focus more on post-compulsory education and lifelong learning.

77. We intend that the priorities for the way ahead should be as follows. We propose that:

- we consult on what needs to be done to **modernise institutional practice** for the future, in both schools and colleges, and the associated assumptions and routines of practitioners so as to achieve the improvements for learners that we seek. As a first step a Subject Committee policy review on "The School of the Future" is planned;
- statutory responsibilities of the **GTC (W)** should be clarified and augmented, so that its status as an authoritative voice for the teaching profession is enhanced;
- the **initial training of teachers** should be evaluated to ensure that we offer the right mix of routes to achieving Qualified Teacher Status. This would include looking again at the form and content of initial teacher training to ensure that it offers the best foundation for a successful teaching career and takes account of wider Assembly priorities;
- **barriers to flexible deployment and exchange**, affecting practitioners in different settings must be overcome progressively - if necessary by legislative change. For the long term, this will be important to the effective operation of partnerships - notably the CCETs. We shall give careful consideration to the degree to which FE institutions and other providers are adequately funded to fulfil this objective;
- links between **CPD and Communities First** areas will be forged so that methods of involving teachers fully in tackling issues of deprivation can be trialled and evaluated. This may include whole school transformation approaches and developing multi-professional teams to work beyond the school gate;

- induction and early professional development in Wales is likely to feature a **statutory induction year**, followed by a further two years of support for newly qualified teachers, from September 2003;

- **school leadership modules** will be introduced in Wales from next year specifically for the wider group exercising leadership roles in schools in support of headteachers;

- increased **para - professional and other support** will be promoted progressively. We shall not dictate a specific skill mix to schools, nor seek to limit their flexibility over purchasing full or part-time support, or making greater use of cost-effective ICT. However, in due course Estyn will be commissioned to undertake a study of best practice taking account of experience not only in schools, but also in FE, work-related training and Careers Wales Services;

- **practitioner fellowships** linking schools and universities will be extended to link FE and HE and we also propose that **a scheme** to assist practitioners who enter and remain in employment in the state sector to **pay off their student loans** should apply to new entrants to teaching who work in shortage subjects in both schools and FE;

- better systems should be put in place to ensure that the Assembly can benefit from the **research** capacity of academics in HE and other practitioners to inform the lifelong learning policy agenda for Wales and to evaluate outcomes;

- increased professional development and other support be promoted in **further education**;

- consideration be given to the introduction of a **principalship qualification** for new principals and for all FE teaching staff to obtain **suitable qualifications**;

- Fforwm and HEW should be encouraged to assist governing bodies in applying best practice standards in all their **human resource policies**, including pay and conditions; and

- while recognising the contribution of **governing bodies** in all sectors, we shall ensure that they gain the support and training they need to be effective - especially in sustaining the work of practitioners over raising standards.

QUESTIONS

1. **What developments are needed in the initial and continuing development of teachers and lecturers so that the learners they serve are equipped for lifelong learning?**
2. **Should the GEST programme be revised to include the professional developments of FE lecturers and further education provision more generally?**
3. **How can practitioners play a wider role in tackling social disadvantage particularly in Communities First areas?**
4. **How can we continue to attract high quality entrants to teaching?**
5. **What developments in training for governors in schools, FE and HE should be given priority?**

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CHAPTER 6: BEYOND COMPULSORY EDUCATION

The New Era for Access

78. We seek nothing less than a new era for learning post-16 in Wales. That must turn on a vigorous effort to widen access - connecting schools, FE, HE and other providers in **strategic compacts** and partnerships for progression. The scene was set by the Education and Training Action Plan for Wales endorsed by the Assembly last year. The mechanisms to promote these changes are now a reality. We have:

- established a new **National Council for Education and Training for Wales**, to work in conjunction with the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales under the joint brand name 'Education and Learning Wales - ELWa';
- promoted local **Community Consortia for Education and Training** for every part of Wales;
- set up the **New Deal Task Force for Wales** to advise on delivering the Welfare to Work agenda;
- introduced a **bespoke package** embracing a **Modern Skills Diploma for Adults**; the extension of **Modern Apprenticeships beyond 25**; and the introduction of a new **Skills Development Fund** - all specifically for Wales;
- launched **Careers Wales**, a distinctive Wales service providing impartial all-age information, advice and guidance to national quality common standards;
- initiated a unique **Knowledge Exploitation Fund** to help our Further and Higher Education institutions and businesses to contribute to wealth generation, complemented by European Objective One and Three funds;
- launched a new style **Individual Learning Account** to encourage people to exploit a wide range of learning options year by year - with special Assembly legislation to introduce discounts for Wales;
- changed the **framework for work-based learning** for adults to extend the qualifications available to participants; provide for immediate entry for those aged 50-plus; and extended eligibility to those with repeat spells of short-term employment interspersed with periods of unemployment; and
- launched a **Basic Skills Strategy**[15] which - specifically for Wales - covers both the pre and post-16 phases.

[15] 'The National Basic Skills Strategy for Wales', April 2001.

79. These changes have been brought about by a new spirit of partnership inspired by the National Assembly itself. They are essential to breaking down barriers which:

- prevent access to flexible, relevant and learner focused provision;
- inhibit co-operation between learning providers; and
- artificially divide academic and vocational pathways to learning.

Funding:

- Planned investment in ELWa – National Council is £1,095 million over the 3 years from 2001.
- Funding for the Careers Service is £93 million over the same period.
- The Knowledge Exploitation Fund amounts to £34m over 4 years. Supplemented by Objective One and Three funding it amounts to £25 million in the period 2000-02.
- Funding for the Basic Skills Strategy amounts to £30 million between 2001-2004.

80. Through wide consultation and joint working with local authorities, the WDA, Careers Wales, Jobcentre Plus and business, the National Council - ELWa is seeking to develop strategies and plans which will further demolish barriers; extend access to all; enhance sustainable learning throughout Wales; and secure better value and quality.

Access, knowledge and skills

81. We fully recognise that in many respects the phase divide pre and post-16 is increasingly artificial. Too few of our young people go on to further academic or vocational education, or training linked to employment. Relative to other benchmark countries, too few of our young people and adults are lifting their skills and attaining qualifications at levels 3 and 4. The deficit in basic skills of functional literacy and numeracy among adults is grave. None of these problems will be overcome without the closest collaboration between schools together with further and higher education, training providers and employers.

Further Education:

- There were 204,444 enrolments in the 1999/2000 learning year.
- 73 per cent of full-time students completed their programme of study.
- 43 per cent continued their programme of study or took another FE programme.
- 12 per cent went on to higher education and 11 per cent entered employment.

82. Our ambitions to transform **access** to higher education will not be fulfilled unless universities consistently link with schools and colleges and encourage more

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pupils to think that these are places for them. Some pupils under 16 will be better provided for in college or work-related education. Others will need the opportunity to take GCSEs early or retake them; to mix and match vocational and academic qualifications; or to round out their curriculum entitlement post-16. At points there may be child care or dependent responsibilities requiring close liaison between the provider and the welfare system. The partnerships promoted through CCETs will be significant in bridging the pre and post 16 phase divide. Indeed, they and the regional committees of the National Council - ELWa are important to securing a more dynamic, entrepreneurial economy underpinned by a workforce with the knowledge, skills and adaptability necessary for the future.

83. Moreover, the position of **FE institutions** - which cater for over 200,000 learners annually and deliver around 70 per cent of all qualifications taken post 16 - is pivotal. The Future Skills Wales report shows that around 30 per cent of employers suffer from skill shortages with significant gaps between the skills employers need and the skills of their workforces. There is a tendency for firms to fall into a low skills trap; because they cannot readily obtain the higher skills levels they need for high growth, they settle for lower skills levels and low growth. Against that background, the Wales Skills Task Force has made 50 challenging recommendations. They put skills firmly at the centre of our economic and learning agenda. We are responding to these in an Action Plan to complement the emerging National Economic Development Strategy - with ELWa having a major role in delivery, not least through FE and other providers.

84. The actions we have taken for modern apprenticeships, skills development and adults will all help employers raise skills at craft, technician and management levels. They will help raise awareness of the needs for succession planning, and of the benefits of becoming Investors in People. They will support the adoption of lifelong learning as the norm for everyone. They are backed by the new Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs) which apply annual discounts of 20 per cent for a wide range of eligible courses, and 80 per cent to certain key courses in IT and learning Welsh. We are also committed to open 50,000 ILAs by March 2002: to date more than 43,000 have been opened. At the same time we aim to make the most of the new **Jobcentre Plus** - even though its functions are not devolved. We shall:

- consider whether the Wales New Deal Task Force should have a role in focusing on the way in which **welfare benefits** support or present barriers to the transition to work;
- ensure that the skills development components of the **New Deal** reflect the Future Skills Wales agenda and the forthcoming **Employment and Skills**

Action Plan for Wales;

- ensure that ELWa and Careers Wales work closely with Jobcentre Plus, the WDA and other partners to deliver on Assembly priorities for skills and training, **packaging provision** to meet labour market needs and agency eligibility requirements; preserving the existing emphasis on transferable skills; and attending to Communities First areas;
- carry out a further major **Future Skills Wales survey** in 2003 to assess progress made and the action needed thereafter; and
- ensure that ELWa and its partners provides strategic guidance to organisations wishing to put forward proposals under the HRD **European Structural Fund** and New Deal Partnership.

Priorities

85. Our key priorities for action for the way ahead are these.

- The change in focus towards the 14-19 phase and transition planning at 16 will be complemented by a radical development in services for young people and a continuing commitment to a statutory youth service. The Assembly will set the legislative framework for partnerships to be led by local authorities involving both the statutory and voluntary sectors under **Extending Entitlement**. The partnerships will not prevent providers – like Careers Wales - from doing what they do best. They will ensure that their capacities and expertise achieve a synergy and coherence that they cannot accomplish separately. The ELL Minister will consult on legislative directions prior to their issue.
- We shall promote and fund **continuing training and development for practitioners who serve the needs of young people** who are most disadvantaged and at risk of disaffection - whose effectiveness in joint working would be greatly increased by such provision. Trial arrangements will be established for Youth Gateway providers in collaboration with Drug and Youth Offending Teams; family centre and women's refuge staff; homelessness units; Youth Access Teams and the voluntary sector.
- We want to ensure that secondary schools work with Education Business Partnerships, CCETs and others to meet pupils' needs more effectively. Where legislative changes prove necessary, enable schools to develop **support plans for pupils' transitions post-16** in ways that enrich their opportunities and choices, we shall seek them.
- We shall require ELWa to shift the balance of its investment to **reward**

providers that meet demanding conditions for standards; quality; access; and above all outcomes. We shall expect it to focus on the needs of business sectors locally, regionally or nationally, as appropriate. We shall want it to tailor its work to the needs of communities applying new approaches, including leading edge technologies to bring more and more young people and adults into learning. We want ELWa to work in partnership with providers to develop clear progression routes within learners' reach in ways, at levels and at times best suited to individual needs.

- We expect ELWa to set demanding requirements of quality and performance for all learning providers, and to **determine the accreditation for informal learning** and voluntary sector activity to support lifelong learning and outreach. That entails appropriate inspection and quality assurance arrangements focused constructively so as to enable providers to build on their strengths and overcome the weaknesses that affect learners' life chances.

- We shall consider the **National Council - ELWa's first corporate plan** towards the end of the year. We shall expect it to cover action to raise basic, generic and higher level skills. At the same time we shall take stock of how the Council proposes to take forward its review of the funding arrangements applying to post 16 learning providers, including schools' sixth forms, so that appropriate changes might be considered for the future.

- We shall strengthen **links between higher education and other providers** with the aim of encouraging everyone who has the potential to benefit, to go on to further studies. Further and higher education institutions already work closely together to provide HE programmes, and community-based learning geared to the needs of adults – 2,158 learners took HE courses in FE institutions in 1999/2000. At the strategic level, the Councils within ELWa will need still greater scope to plan together to get the most from this collaboration. We shall ensure that the necessary powers are in place to provide for this.

- We envisage further development of the local **Consortium principle** to enable partners to share staff and other resources in the interests of promoting learning choice, reducing duplication, eliminating nugatory competition, integrating learning to different settings, and raising standards of attainment. Where we identify structural, bureaucratic or regulatory obstacles we shall seek to simplify the system in learners' interests and also to build community ownership and confidence.

- We intend that joint working between ACCAC and ELWa and other partners

should secure rapid **progress to introduce the fully credit-based qualification and transfer framework** upon which Wales has led the way. Those who hesitate to embark on learning for fear of failure at the end of a long investment of time and effort will get the assurance they need by banking credits as they go along. Those who want choice and flexibility will find that credits are more closely allied to modern lifestyles and more learner focused.

- We shall continue to encourage **Careers Wales** companies to develop their services and support to lifelong learners of all ages but, particularly within schools at key transition stages and FE colleges. This is to ensure that young people who rightly demand high quality support and mentoring can make informed choices at an earlier stage - and avoid costly misdirection.

- We expect **Careers Wales** to make demonstrably better use of resources, publish far more rigorous data on outcomes, communicate and market more effectively, develop interactive ICT based methods, extend common standards under the brand, conduct staff development more inclusively and rationalise organisationally to deliver effectively at both local and national level.

- We shall invite the **HEFCW** to develop the **careers services** of HE institutions and explore linkages with Careers Wales to secure effective joint working.

- We are participating in the UK review of the **National Training Organisation** network. We will ensure that the revised arrangements suit the needs of Wales and our skills agenda including the work of ELWa and the Future Skills Wales partnership.

- We intend that ACCAC will provide advice on the approval of external **qualifications** in Wales (save for HE qualifications) in relation to pre-19 learners and those aged 19 and above from September 2002, and ensure that the standards and operations of the WJEC and other awarding bodies are fit for purpose.

- We will continue to support the workplace learning activities of **Trades Unions** and will evaluate the **Wales Union Learning Fund** to ensure that the programme is even more effective and targeted at key priorities.

QUESTIONS

1. **Do you think that the Assembly should build on the concept of CCETs founded on partnership, with an expanded role starting at KS3?**
2. **Do you agree on the need for the two Councils of ELWa to operate more flexibly across their respective boundaries in the planning, funding and delivery of post-16 learning?**
3. **How should Careers Wales develop to widen awareness of opportunities?**
4. **How should ELWa ensure that HEIs and FEIs develop robust compacts for access with one another, and with schools, with an eye to establishing compacts throughout Wales by 2005?**

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CHAPTER 7: ACCESS AND THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Opening doors

86. We want higher education in Wales to make an even bigger contribution to realising the Assembly's plans for the economic, social and cultural regeneration of the country. Higher education is no longer the preserve of a small elite. Some 24 per cent of 19-24 year olds in Wales go on to higher education. Student numbers and the public money invested in the sector continues to increase substantially year by year. Given the scale of this public investment it is inevitable - and very necessary - that the Assembly should seek to strike the most positive balance between ensuring that higher education institutions give a good account of themselves in meeting the requirements of large scale public investment, and preserving the scope they need to think freely and act effectively.

87. It is inevitable too that an even greater interest will be taken in patterns of **access.** The ability to benefit from, and to succeed in, higher education is not confined to a single socio economic group. Welsh HE performs well relative to other similar sectors elsewhere in the UK in relation to social disadvantage and recruitment. Yet it remains the case that there is a very great disparity between the numbers of students admitted to higher education from privileged and dis-advantaged homes. There is no possibility of meeting and exceeding participation rates that already exist in Scotland and Northern Ireland - with all the benefits that brings for skills and community confidence - if access to HE continues to be skewed in this way.

Context:

- Planned investment in HE for 2001-02 increases by 8 per cent to £375m.
- There were 101,251 enrolments on higher education courses in Wales in AY 1999/2000, excluding the Open University.
- During the 1993-98 quality assessment cycle, no teaching provision was found to be unsatisfactory. 37 per cent was judged to be excellent.
- Between 1992 and 1996, the number of departments in the higher rated categories of the Research Assessment Exercise rose from 32 to 60.
- In 2001-02, the Assembly's grant to HEFCW amounts to £321.4 million, or 6.6 per cent of DfES's grant to HEFCE/TTA.
- In 1998/99, 26.4 per cent of young people from under-represented groups entered HE, compared with 25.1 per cent for the UK as a whole.

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88. We recognise that there is no future in a parochial model for Welsh HE. It has to operate to benchmark standards which are credible internationally and nationally, as well as locally. Thus whatever standards may be applicable for quality assurance and performance assessment across the UK, we expect Welsh HE to be measured by them. Certainly the sector has an essential part to play in producing the highly qualified people which a more developed economy demands. We want it to promote creativity and entrepreneurship; to provide an advanced technology base to attract *more* R&D and inward investment; and to provide an excellent source of knowledge transfer and advice. Equally, an internationally recognised HE sector has an important place in raising the international profile and influence of Wales itself.

89. The ELL Committee's comprehensive policy review of HE in Wales has to be seen against that background. We have promised that its recommendations will be considered to inform a 10-year strategy for the sector in Wales. We are committed to ensuring that the sector is adequately funded for the way ahead. The profile for that funding will be considered in successive budget planning rounds, not least the one linked to the forthcoming comprehensive spending review. Never before has HE in Wales been given such thoroughgoing attention, nor such important assurance for the future.

90. The HE sector in Wales comprises 13 relatively small institutions. They provide good quality education to over 100,000 students (almost half of whom come from outside Wales). They contain a substantial number of high rated research departments. However, income from the Research Councils amounts to only some 3.2 per cent of the UK total. HE institutions face strong competition in getting access to research, and other forms of funding. Yet continued investment is vital to maintain the up-to-date facilities and equipment which are necessary to improve the sector's operational and research base. In addition, institutions must invest in teaching and learning in order to attract students to their courses (against increasing competition from institutions in England, and from e-learning developments too). There are also the investment requirements associated with widening access and participation, and providing more Welsh medium higher education. As things stand, the Assembly already invests more than its Barnet share in higher education, and there remain concerns about the future sustainability of the current patterns of provision.

91. We shall not pre-empt the outcome of the ELL Committee Review. We are certain that it will be far-reaching and extremely positive. We shall give every one of its recommendations the most serious attention and shape an appropriate programme for action within the context of the 10-year strategy. However, we look

to secure a high performance sector across several different dimensions. We want to see:

- a sustained programme to link Welsh HE to schools, colleges and other providers and to market and promote the sector nationally and internationally - not least in Communities First areas - in order to develop **new access pathways** for students from groups that are under-represented in HE and in both languages;
- a much more determined and enterprising approach towards **knowledge exploitation and transfer** with clearer rewards for success and to provide the essential underpinning for the development of the economic mission of Welsh HEIs supplementing teaching and research;
- a significant effort to generate income for **research and development**, not least from the Research Councils themselves, the private sector and trusts;
- a new push to tap the lucrative market for learning amongst **students outwith the UK and the EU**;
- a vigorous programme to use 'Foresight' principles to build on leading edge sciences and technologies; to play to our strengths; and **to attract and retain world-beating, business-relevant capacity for Wales**;
- the introduction of new **collaborative** methods to reduce overhead costs and to share facilities and capabilities throughout the sector.

92. It is unlikely that any of this will be achieved without radically new approaches to the development of collaboration and co-operation taking appropriate account of the scope that the regions of Wales offer for the achievement of greater coherence and reach. We hope that the individual institutions and their Governors will be able to bring about the required changes working together, and, as appropriate, through HEW and the HEFCW. However, for a vigorous sector committed to transforming Welsh prospects, stasis is not an option. The competitive pressures are such that were the momentum for continuous and dramatic improvement in the coherence and productivity of the overall system to falter, then the responsibility for recovering the position must be clearly identified. We should want to take full account of the conclusions of the ELL Subject Committee review. However, in principle we should be prepared to make this responsibility more evident than is the case under existing legislation. In effect, this would mean that subject to consultation on safeguards, the National Assembly would be in a position to enable the HEFCW to exercise a planning role where it is necessary to underpin the collaboration that is essential to securing the progressive improvements in performance and outcome that we seek.

Student Support

93. Total enrolments in further and higher education continue to increase. By academic year 1999/2000 they exceeded 305,000. We are well on course to achieving the enrolment targets set out in betterwales.com. In further education, the majority of students are adults, predominantly part-timers. In higher education, 40 per cent of enrolments are from students aged over 24. Moreover, Welsh HE institutions have a higher proportion of both mature and young full-time undergraduate entrants from under-represented groups than the UK as a whole. The higher proportion of both mature and young full-time undergraduate entrants from under-represented groups relative to the UK as a whole in Welsh HE has been achieved in part as a consequence of a large increase in student access and hardship funds. They have grown in total from less than £3 million in 1998-99 to £20 million in 2001-02.

Students

- FE enrolments increased from 191,996 in AY 1997/98 to 204,444 enrolments in AY 1999/2000. FE Student Access Funds increased from £0.422 million to £3.027 million over the same period, and to £10 million in 2001/02.
- HE enrolments increased from 95,453 in AY 1997/98 to 101,251 in AY 1999/2000. HE Student Hardship and other support funds increased from £1.329 million to £2.998 million over the same period, and to £10 million in 2001/02.
- In AY 1998/99, 59 per cent of Welsh domiciled students on full-time/sandwich HE courses studied in Wales and 40 per cent studied at HE institutions in England.

94. Our aim remains to encourage even more people to participate in learning throughout their lives. In particular, we want to put in place targeted financial support so that all young people can continue in education or training post-16 and that particularly needy mature students can participate in lifelong learning. Following on from the Partnership Agreement, we appointed an independent investigation group on student hardship and funding in Wales, to report on options for tackling problems inherent in the current system of student maintenance and support.

95. The Group reported on 14 June and has made 54 recommendations. The ELL Minister has already implemented the recommendation for an immediate increase in the level of student access and hardship funds (from £11.5 million to £20 million). The Group also recommended that the current access and hardship arrangements should be replaced by a new system of (means-tested) Learning Maintenance

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Allowances for 16-18 year olds, and Learner Maintenance Bursaries for undergraduates and for FE students aged 19 and over. This would be backed up by a Financial Contingency Fund to act as a safety net for all learners. We shall:

- **pursue** all the recommendations relevant to the UK central government, particularly those on the future of tuition fees, with the relevant Ministerial teams;
- give **rigorous consideration** to the recommendations that fall to the Assembly itself, consulting on operational matters of implementation, as appropriate;
- consider the detailed **financial implications** of the Report in the current Budget Planning Round, and succeeding ones; and
- seek to put in place the **legislative powers** to provide a firm statutory base for learners' entitlement to Maintenance Allowances and Bursaries.

QUESTIONS

1. **Are the levels of support set out in the Rees Report adequate to encourage the levels of access and participation we seek?**
2. **Should learner support from the Assembly be principally restricted to Welsh domiciled students who also choose to study in Wales?**
3. **What is your view of the proposal to give HEFCW a planning role under safeguards?**
4. **Should we seek to combine the two Councils of ELWa in due course?**
5. **How do you see the HEFCW working with HEIs, FEIs and business to develop skills, enterprise, and knowledge?**

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CHAPTER 8: OUTCOMES

The Shape of Success

96. This paving document describes a range of measures which aim at nothing less than transforming the life chances of people in Wales for the better. It is designed to enable Wales to vault the barriers to social progress and prosperity through lifelong learning that is at once testing and enjoyable. Holding to high ambition, making wise use of available funds, continuously improving standards, tough evaluation, support for practitioners, and to partnership principles, will bring success. The way in which their success is defined in this document provides the basis for dialogue with local authorities on Education Strategic Plans, for the corporate planning at ELWa - both National Council and HEFCW, and for much else besides[16]. The outcomes we seek have strong **qualitative** dimensions. But there will also be powerful results that can be expressed in **quantitative** terms. These are they.

Key Stage 2

Within the context of a broad and balanced curriculum, the percentage of pupils attaining at least **level 4** in the core subjects should be lifted into the 70-80 per cent range by 2002; to the 80-85 per cent range from 2004; to 85-90 per cent by 2007 and to 90 per cent by 2010.

Key Stage 3

The percentage of those pupils attaining at least **level 5** in the core subjects to be lifted to the 70-80 per cent range by 2002. By 2004 to 2007 it should be possible to go further still into the 80-85 per cent range with 85-90 per cent achieving at the expected level by 2010. Then 70 per cent of pupils to achieve at the expected level at the end of Key Stage 3 in all subjects of the curriculum by 2007; and 80 per cent by 2010.

Level 2 Qualifications

The percentage of 15 year olds achieving **5 GCSEs A* to C** grades or equivalent to increase from 44 per cent in 1997, to 54 per cent by 2002; to 58 per cent by 2004; to 64 per cent by 2007; and over 75 per cent to finish compsulory education achieving at least **5 GCSE A* to C** grades or equivalent by 2010.

The percentage of 15 year olds achieving **5 GCSEs A* to G** grades or equivalent should be lifted from 80 per cent in 1997, to 91 per cent by 2002 and to 95 per cent

[16] See also ETAP - 'Education and Training Action Plan for Wales' – 1999.

by 2004. All to remain in education or go on to training in employment by 2010, and none to leave school unqualified.

Core subject indicator

The percentage of 15 year olds achieving **GCSE A* to C** grades or equivalent in maths, science, Welsh or English (in combination) should exceed the mid point in the BEST[17] range of 40 to 60 per cent by 2004; 50-70 per cent by 2007; and 55 - 75 per cent by 2010.

Inclusion

Reduce the number of **boys underachieving by comparison to girls** by 50 per cent by 2002 as against 1996 gap; by 55 per cent by 2004; and by 60 per cent by 2010.

The number of **15 year olds leaving full-time education** without a recognised qualification to be 15 per cent lower than 1999 by 2002; 25 per cent lower than 1999 by 2004; 60 per cent lower by 2007; and 100 per cent lower by 2010.

No schools having fewer than 25 per cent of 15 year olds achieving at **least 5 GCSE A* to C** grades by 2002; none having less than 30 per cent by 2004; and none having less than 35 per cent by 2007 and none having less than 40 per cent by 2010 with all schools having clear strengths; innovating; applying best practice and serving their communities.

Primary and secondary class standards to be satisfactory for 98 per cent of classes by 2007; and 100 per cent by 2010, with no school assessed as failing or as having unsatisfactory or poor standards. Percentage assessed as good or very good to reach at least 65 per cent by 2007.

Reduction in **absenteeism** in secondary schools to below 8 per cent by 2004; below 7 per cent by 2007; and below 5 per cent by 2010.

Local authorities should work with schools to ensure that 75 per cent of **'looked after children'** should leave school with at **least two GCSEs or equivalent** by 2003; with at least a range of qualifications at level 2 by 2007; and a range of qualifications at levels 2 and 3, (and a minimum of 5 GCSEs or equivalent) by 2010.

Every child to receive the benefit of a **full prospectus of out of school activities** combining volunteering, enterprise, cultural, sporting and outdoor activities by 2010.

22,000 new **National Lottery-funded childcare places** to be created through the Early Years and Child Care Development Plans by 2003.

[17] BEST - 'Building Excellent Schools Together' – 1997.

No **infant classes** with over 30 pupils (save for permitted statutory exceptions), by September 2001; cut junior classes to 30 or less pupils by September 2003; (and press ahead with a view to cutting all primary classes) to 25 pupils or less within the second term of the National Assembly.

Local authorities to have made a significant investment in **the repair, renewal and replacement of school buildings** and all local authorities to have in place by 2003 asset management plans and programmes of capital investment in school to repair, renew and replace schools - so that by 2010 they are in good physical shape, properly maintained; and enable learners to make fully **effective use of IT.**

All local authorities to have in place approved **education strategic plans** by 2002 covering the period 2002-05 to provide effective drivers of school improvement.

Lifelong Learning Targets

The numbers of **16-18 year olds without qualifications** to reduce from some 1 in 5 in 1996; to 1 in 10 by 2002; to 1 in 20 by 2004; 1 in 25 by 2007 and 1 in 50 by 2010.

The numbers of **19 year olds without an NVQ level 2** or equivalent to reduce from over 1 in 3 in 1996 to some 1 in 5 by 2002; to fewer than 1 in 5 by 2004; to 1 in 6 by 2007; and 1 in 7 by 2010.

The numbers of **19 year olds without an NVQ level 3** or equivalent to reduce from 3 in 5 in 2000 to less than 3 in 5 by 2004; to approaching 1 in 2 by 2007; and 1 in 2 by 2010.

At least 25 per cent of **16 - 19 year olds** to attain the **Welsh Baccalaureate** by 2010.

The proportion of **adults of working age without qualifications** to reduce from some 1 in 4 in 1996; to 1 in 7 by 2002; to fewer than 1 in 8 by 2004; 1 in 9 by 2007; and 1 in 10 by 2010.

The proportion of **adults of working age with an NVQ level 2 or equivalent** to increase from over 5 in 10 in 1996; to 7 in 10 by 2002; over 7 in 10 by 2004; 8 in 10 by 2007; and over 8 in 10 by 2010.

The proportion of **adults of working age with an NVQ level 3 or equivalent** to increase from some 3 in 10 in 1996; to approaching 5 in 10 by 2002; to over 5 in 10 by 2004; to 6 in 10 by 2007 and over 6 in 10 by 2010.

The proportion of **adults of working age with NVQ level 4 or equivalent** to increase from some 1 in 5 in 1996; to over 1 in 4 by 2002; approaching 3 in 10 by 2004; at least 3 in 10 by 2007; and over 3 in 10 by 2010.

The proportion of **working age adults with functional basic skills in literacy** to increase from some 8 in 10 in 1996; to at least 9 in 10 by 2002; and to above 9 in 10 by 2004 and to maintain this level thereafter.

The proportion of **adults with functional basic skills in numeracy** to increase from over 5 in 10 in 1996; to 6 in 10 by 2002; and above 6 in 10 by 2004; to 8 in 10 by 2007; and to 9 in 10 by 2010.

The **Family Literacy and Numeracy Programmes** to be expanded so that 2300 parents and children are involved by 2003; 9,000 by 2004; 12,000 by 2007; and 15,000 by 2010.

Careers Wales to be established as an all-age service providing information and advice on learning and careers with a **capacity for 80,000** people a year to use its telephone help-line; and the **Youth Gateway Scheme** to offer all young people who need it a service which assesses their requirements and an agreed career action plan by 2003.

Employer Participation

A new framework be established in support of **smaller enterprises** employing less than 50 people, to encourage their participation in employee training and development to measurable accredited standards.

For **organisations employing less than 50 people**, 825 to achieve the **Investors in People Standard** by 2002; 1,100 by 2004; 1,350 by 2007; and 1,500 by 2010.

The percentage of **organisations with 50 or more employees** achieving the **Investors in People Standard** to increase from 15 per cent in 1997; to 35 per cent by 2002; to 40 per cent by 2004; to 50 per cent by 2007; and 58 per cent by 2010.

The percentage of **organisations employing 200 or more people**, achieving the **Investors in People Standard** to increase from 27 per cent in 1997; to 48 per cent by 2002; to 58 per cent by 2004; to 70 per cent by 2007; and to 80 per cent by 2010.

Widening Participation

The number of **participants in post-16 education and training** to increase by at least 10,000 annually from 1999 to 2004; and 12,000 annually from 2004 to 2010.

By 2004, work-based learning programmes, including **Modern Apprenticeships** and the **Modern Skills Diploma for Adults** will provide for over 14,000 participants at NVQ level 3 and above.

The **New Deal** to help 30,000 under 25s leave benefit for work or training and also to target inactivity amongst older age groups, lone parents and disabled people by 2003.

By 2007, an additional 36,000 students to have been attracted into **higher and further education** helped by the substantial new provision for **Access Funds;**

50,000 **Individual Learning Accounts** to have been created by 2002; the National Council - ELWa to establish baselines for target setting discount ILAs by 2003.

15 per cent of **further education courses** to reach the highest standard (Grade 1); and 70 per cent to reach Grade 1 and 2 by 2003; 18 per cent to reach grade 1 and 80 per cent grade 1 and 2 by 2007; and 20 per cent to reach grade 1 and 90 per cent to reach Grade 1 and 2 by 2010.

Top level **research ratings in higher education** to increase by a third by 2003; 35 per cent by 2007; and 40 per cent by 2010.

Higher education institutions to increase **income** from research, charities, industry commerce and the public sector by 20 per cent between 2000 and 2004; a further 12 per cent by 2007; and a further 10 per cent by 2010.

Supported by the UK Government's Overseas Students Initiative, the number of **overseas students** a year attending higher education courses in Wales to increase by some 3,000 by 2003; at least 9,000 by 2007 and 12,000 by 2010.

QUESTIONS

1. **Accepting that providers and practitioners must start from where they find themselves, do you agree that these outcomes and targets represent sensible and achievable ambitions?**
2. **Has anything been overlooked?**
3. **To what extent should we develop the indicators by reference to international benchmarks?**

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ANNEX 1

THE LEARNING COUNTRY

How To Respond

This paving document includes a number of questions on which we would like your views. We also welcome questions on all parts of the document. Under the Code of Practice on Open Government, we may make responses on this consultation publicly available, unless you ask for your response to remain confidential.

Please send your response to this paving document by **the end of October 2001** to:

Mr Lee Anderson
Lifelong Learning Division 3
Training and Education Department
National Assembly for Wales
Room N. 07, Third Floor
Cathays Park
Cardiff CF10 3NQ
Telephone: (029) 2082 5845
Fax: (029) 2082 5852
E-mail: lee.anderson@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Additional copies of this paving document can also be obtained from the above. It is also available on the National Assembly Web Site, whose address is www.learning.wales.gov.uk or www.dysgu.cymru.gov.uk and is available in Braille and on audio-cassette.

ANNEX 2

THE LEARNING COUNTRY

Abbreviations

ACCAC

Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales

ACE

Adult Continuing Education

ADEW

Association of Directors of Education in Wales

BEST

Building Excellent Schools Together

CCETs

Community Consortia for Education and Training

CoEA

Certificate of Educational Achievement

CPD

Continuing Professional Development

DfEE

Department for Education and Employment

DfES

Department for Education and Skills

EFQM

European Foundation for Quality Management

ELL

Education and Lifelong Learning

ELWa

The joint brand name of the National Council for Education and Training for Wales and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales

EOC

Equal Opportunities Commission

Estyn

Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales

ETAG

Education and Training Action Group

ETAP

Education and Training Action Plan

EU

European Union

FE

Further Education

GCSE

General Certificate of Secondary Education

GDP

Gross Domestic Product

GEST

Grants for Education Support and Training Programme

GNVQ

General National Vocational Qualification

GTC (W)

General Teaching Council (Wales)

HE

Higher Education

HEFCW

Higher Education Funding Council for Wales

HEW

Higher Education Wales

HRD

Human Resources Development

ICT

Information and Communication Technologies

IiP

Investors in People

ILA

Individual Learning Account

IT

Information Technology

LEA

Local Education Authority

NLW

National Library of Wales

NMGW

National Museums and Galleries of Wales

MSDA

Modern Skills Diploma for Adults

NGfL

National Grid for Learning

NOF

New Opportunities Fund

NTO

National Training Organisation

NVQ

National Vocational Qualification

PGCE

Post Graduate Certificate of Education

PRU

Pupil Referral Unit

SCW

Sports Council Wales

SEN

Special Educational Needs

71

SME

Small to Medium-Sized Enterprise

SOP

Schools Organisation Plan

Ufi

University for Industry (learndirect)

WDA

Welsh Development Agency

WLB

Welsh Language Board

WLGA

Wales Local Government Association

WULF

Wales Union Learning Fund

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learning and skills development agency

The Learning Country
A Paving Document from the National Assembly for Wales

Response from the Learning and Skills Development Agency

1. The Learning and Skills Development Agency is a strategic resource in England and Wales for the development of policy and practice in post-16 education and training. In Wales the Agency operates as Dysg with a national office linking into the specific needs in Welsh education and training. Dysg has a clear brief to work across those sectors which fall within the remit of ELWa National Council.

2. We welcome the opportunity to respond to the Paving Document[1] and recognise its importance as the first comprehensive strategy statement on education and lifelong learning to issue from the National Assembly for Wales.

3. We welcome the power of the National Assembly for Wales to determine which legislation passed through the UK Parliament should be enacted in Wales, ensuring that arrangements fit the environment and meet the defined national and local needs in Wales. We note that while the key priorities for the National Assembly are consistent with the UK government's – increasing participation, raising attainment and skills levels - the means of achieving the priorities may increasingly differ in the two countries.

4. As different approaches are implemented, comparative analysis of impact will be important to ensure that policy development in England and Wales is informed by these different experiences. LSDA's research effort will support comparative analysis and informed debate.

5. We concentrate our comments on those proposals that have a clear relevance to our remit and expertise. We outline below some of the key points from our response that we wish to emphasise.

Partnership and coherent 14-19 provision

6. The Document makes a series of proposals aimed at creating a more flexible and coherent 14-19 phase, requiring schools to plan more systematically for the transition at 16 in partnership with other local post-16 learning providers, Careers Wales and the National Council. The Community Consortia for Education and Training (CCETs) are a valuable

[1] Referred to hereafter as the Document

CE 083562

partnership mechanism, and could play an important role in facilitating effective collaboration.

7. In addition, CCETs might, particularly where co-ordinated effectively at a regional level, help to ensure awareness among pre- and post-compulsory learners of the opportunities available through the increased flexibility provided by credit-based developments and the emerging new qualifications. We therefore see the CCETs having a vital role in the developing structures, and it will be essential that they are well supported in this role by ELWa National Council's regional secretariats.

8. The development of a new 14-19 curriculum strategy will place a stronger premium on effective policy coherence pre- and post-16. Coherence between ELWa's strategy and that of the National Assembly for Wales will therefore be essential.

Implementation strategy

9. The new flexibility in the 14-19 curriculum will have significant implications for institutional development. Smooth implementation will require careful preparation at institutional level to ensure that the mechanisms and capacity exists to enable smooth delivery. Discussion on the new proposals must therefore give due attention to implementation at institutional level.

Basic and Key Skills Strategy

10. The Document makes a number of important proposals in relation to the Basic, Key and, in ELWa's terminology, the Essential Skills agendas. We are concerned at the current lack of co-ordination across Basic and Key Skills provision in Wales, in particular between the Key Skills Support Programme and the operation of the Basic Skills Strategy. We feel that increasing the links and co-ordination between these two areas could result in a more efficient use of resources at all curriculum stages. We have noted from our own experience within LSDA the positive benefits of maintaining close working relationships between the Basic Skills and Key Skills teams.

Unique learner number

11. We strongly support the proposals for a unique learner identifier number to give more rapid access to data and assist transitions at 11, 16 and throughout life. We recommend that the system should include all compulsory, post-compulsory and higher education and that formal links with other parts of the UK are anticipated to ensure a unified system. We would suggest that a system spanning all learning would greatly assist the delivery and funding of the flexible curriculum and promote lifelong learning.

12. Initial research undertaken on learner tracking systems for credit-based provision (FEDA Cymru and KPMG Report for Welsh Funding Councils, 2000) indicates that a unique identifier number is essential to achieve the full benefits of flexible learning offered by a credit-based qualification framework. By facilitating the tracking of learners it will support the delivery

of Careers Wales services, progress file developments and production of a credit transcript for use by learners throughout their learning careers in Wales.

13. In the following pages we set out our comments on specific sections of the Document. Where our comments relate closely to one of the suggested questions, we provide a reference to the question concerned.

Chapter 2: Sound Foundations

14. (Question 11) We support the proposals to promote School Councils. There is clear potential for developing Essential Skills in young people through the activities of these bodies and Canllaw On-Line[2], which should be exploited. It is unclear at present how School Councils might link into other programmes committed to the development of these skills and, in addition, how they will relate to the development of citizenship within the curriculum. We recommend that coherence between these initiatives should be promoted.

15. We welcome the development of new local plans setting out the key objectives and targets for all services affecting children and young people and suggest that there would be benefits to linking this partnership approach to the existing CCET structures. This would help to avoid duplication of resources, for example in relation to the use of primary schools for community provision.

Chapter 3: Comprehensive Education and Lifelong Learning in Wales

Community Focused Schools

16. (Question 1) We note that the Assembly does not intend to establish a specialist schools programme and that the emphasis in Wales is on comprehensive local schools. We recognise that the term 'specialist school' could imply a move away from offering the full national curriculum, and we support the spirit of the policy in Wales to ensure that young people have access to the full national curriculum in their local school.

17. Our view of the specialist schools programme, expanded in our response to the Schools White Paper[3], is that it could offer a mechanism for improving standards and the quality of provision. Developing excellence in an area of the national curriculum can provide an effective starting point in a strategic approach to improving the overall quality of the curriculum offer. A development programme, targeting curriculum areas in those schools in greatest need of improvement, could be an effective means of raising the quality of provision. We believe that pride in an area of curriculum

[2] A website run by the Wales Youth Agency aimed at providing on-line cultural and social information and support for young people.

excellence can also help to raise the profile of the school and raise the self-esteem of staff and pupils.

18. We fully support the emphasis on community focused schools although we feel that the Document is unclear as to the exact nature of the model proposed. The Document clearly indicates the diversity that exists amongst unitary authority areas, requiring community provision in schools to be adapted to meet the local needs and circumstances. If schools themselves initiate the development of services which other providers already offer within the local area, duplication and competition could result. We suggest that a requirement for the full involvement of the relevant CCET partnership might ensure against uncoordinated development.

19. We have several points to make in relation to the list of proposals for legislation in England on which comment is invited (paragraph 39). We support the proposals to give defined schools greater autonomy. We agree that there should be clear criteria for deciding which schools should have extra autonomy. It will be important that decisions about eligibility are transparent and that clear criteria are published in advance.

20. We strongly support the view that the widest possible range of options should be considered to secure school improvement in the state education sector. It is right that this should include consideration of the involvement of external partners including other LEAs, schools and private or voluntary bodies.

21. In particular, we see no grounds for excluding private providers from consideration alongside both traditional and more innovative forms of public provision. It might be helpful however to underline that private providers are not necessarily shareholder owned or for-profit companies. There is a range of voluntary and mutual forms of organisation which may prove to be particularly effective vehicles for generating the joint commitment of key stakeholders which is needed to lead failing schools out of their difficulties.

Secondary Schools and Performance

22. (Question 4) Dysg currently undertakes the support of Key Skills provision in Wales under contract to the National Assembly. We recommend that those leading the Key Skills Support Programme be engaged in the discussions to develop guidance for provision of numeracy and literacy at Key Stage 3. Coherence between them will be invaluable as numeracy and literacy provides the foundation for later learning.

The 14-19 Phase

23. (Question 3) We warmly welcome the move to develop a coherent 14-19 phase and to remove unnecessary barriers to opportunity and progression for this group of learners.

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[3] We are currently preparing our response to *Schools: Achieving Success* (DfES), and a copy will be available on our website (www.LSDA.org.uk) shortly.

24. We fully support the proposals made to increase flexibility in the 14-19 curriculum and also agree that this flexibility should be exercised within a prescribed overall curriculum entitlement. LSDA and its predecessors (FEU and FEDA) have played a leading role in developing proposals and carrying out research into unitised and credit-based provision. This has benefited from the pioneering work and implementation undertaken in Wales.

25. LSDA has carried out work, jointly with the Institute of Education, for the regulatory authorities in Wales, England and Northern Ireland, on the development of a model for an overarching certificate at level 3. We have also carried out development work for the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) on models for Graduation[4]. We strongly support the development of an overarching award at 19, bringing together these two initiatives. We believe that an inclusive model could set a threshold that would motivate lower achievers, while enabling high achievers to record the full range and breadth of their achievements. It could provide a coherent framework for 14-19 study. The current pilot development of the Welsh Baccalaureate will provide valuable evidence to inform approaches in England. The impact of the emerging credit based qualification framework in Wales will be of particular interest.

26. We anticipate that the greater flexibility of the curriculum post-16 will facilitate collaboration between providers (particularly Further Education Colleges and School Sixth Forms) on meeting the needs in a given area. With the use of ILT and some extension of the newly established Video Conferencing Network (funded through ELWa within all FE and HE institutions), the proposed flexible curriculum should enable providers to ensure those staying on in learning post-16 are able to study towards a range of relevant qualifications. By co-operating through CCETs it should be possible to co-ordinate appropriate provider involvement in the delivery of modules with ILT support.

27. We particularly support the proposals to give schools the flexibility they need to develop strong vocational pathways complementing academic ones. We welcome the recognition of the value of vocational education and the support for pupils to mix academic, vocational and work-based options. We believe that enhanced vocational learning will provide a broader curriculum offer to many young people. We expect this to have a positive impact on other aspects of the general curriculum by helping to engage young people in learning and so contribute to raising achievement. It will be important that those who choose the option of following a wholly academic route are guided to enhance their programme with a range of extra-curricula options.

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[4] *Bridging the Gap: New opportunities for 16-18 year olds not in Education, Employment or Training*, Social Exclusion Unit, July 1999. This paper proposed graduation by age 19 that would be 'a challenging but achievable goal requiring as a minimum the level 2 standard of achievement in formal qualifications', together with key skills and enrichment activities.

28. The advice and guidance that pupils receive in making their choices will be important. The new arrangements for 14-19 will have to be designed so as not to lock learners into particular pathways at too early a stage. Young people working towards a level 2 award should be assured that, outside of a core requirement, their choices are equally valid. Furthermore there needs to be a choice of secure progression opportunities at each transition point and crossover points along the way.

29. The new curriculum will pose significant challenges to institutions delivering the new opportunities. For example they will need to manage multi-level profiles throughout the learning phase – individuals may be learning different subjects at different levels at the same time. Timetabling and planning will be more complex as learners have more choices and opportunities to change direction. As already mentioned, advice and guidance will also be more complex. We urge that detailed consideration is given to ensuring that institutions are effectively prepared for implementation of the new curriculum.

30. We welcome the proposals to improve the quality and relevance of work experience as part of an improved approach to vocational learning. In our experience, these opportunities are often formative for young people, providing them with a valuable chance to gain and increase their employability skills. The involvement of brokerage organisations in linking with business and training providers will be crucial in enabling schools and colleges to make the most of the opportunities.

31. We look forward to participating in the planned consultation on the development of policy in the 14-19 field during 2002.

Building Supportive Environments

32. (Question 7) We welcome the focus on provision of a wide range of activities outside of the school day. We particularly support the proposal for a prospectus of such activities for every child at school in Wales, possibly incentive or credit-based. We believe there are a number of short but relevant qualifications that young people could gain in cultural or sporting areas (such as the Football Association's coaching courses and the Duke of Edinburgh Award), which would promote a learning culture and build up self-esteem at an early age.

33. We support the suggestion that the prospectus should include activities covering the vacation period. We are aware that the Report of the Independent Investigation Group on Student Hardship and Funding in Wales[5] took a favourable view of Summer Schools. We support their recommendation that the National Assembly should review the impact of such provision to assess its capacity to inspire potential learners under 16 from disadvantaged backgrounds.

[5] Group established by the National Assembly of Wales; report published by Cardiff University July 2001

34. We warmly welcomed the introduction of free access to museums and libraries. Museums and libraries offer a valuable resource for innovative and motivating curricula and to support the culture of lifelong learning.

Recognising Success and Avoiding Failure

35. We note the proposal that national publication of league tables will cease in Wales in favour of publication of LEA-wide data. An evaluation of this approach compared to that in England could be of use. In particular, this might consider parents' views of the approach and any impact on patterns of parental choice.

Chapter 4: Learning and Equality of Opportunity in Wales

Learning Welsh

36. (Question 5) We fully support the measures taken and proposed to promote learning of the Welsh language and Welsh medium provision. We are aware, however, that the support of Welsh medium within the FE recurrent funding methodology focused on a requirement for the provision to be assessed through the medium of Welsh. This did not support Welsh medium provision within community or informal learning. Such provision is vital, particularly in those communities where Welsh is the majority first language, some of which include those particularly deprived wards which qualify for Communities First funding. We suggest that ELWa consider, within their review of funding for post-16 learning, how to ensure that a wide range of provision can be offered through the Welsh medium.

37. In addition, we are aware of limitations in the assessment of Key Skills through the medium of Welsh. There is only one assessment opportunity each year for this mode of assessment and this appears to limit uptake in this area.

38. Consideration needs to be given to ensuring that Welsh language provision is smooth across transitions at 11 and 16. Common practice in FE is to give newly enrolling students the opportunity to choose to be assessed in Welsh. There is some anecdotal evidence from current work being undertaken on bilingualism through Dysg that 16 year olds, faced with a new situation at college, do not wish to appear different or risk any possible isolation from their peer group through choosing Welsh medium.

39. We suggest that if it were the norm for initial induction and introductory sessions to be undertaken bilingually then this might assist in overcoming such fears and increasing uptake of Welsh language provision into post-compulsory education and training.

ICT

40. (Question 6) We share the view expressed that the new technologies should be used to open up opportunities for learning equitably. Whilst welcoming the general approach presented in the Document we feel that

the interrelationships between the following bodies is unclear:

- the ICT Advisory Panel
- the Task Force to map out a strategy for ICT in education
- the National Grid for Learning Team.

41. In addition, the Document refers to the proposal that the Education and Lifelong Learning (ELL) Minister establish an informal e-learning advisory panel. We are also aware of proposals for a similar advisory group on e-learning which may be established by ELWa. A recent survey of e-learning[6] commissioned by ELWa presented the need for overarching co-ordination of developments in this area. Building on the work undertaken within Dysg, we would also suggest that the relevant agencies in Wales should work in a co-ordinated manner towards a compatible broadband infrastructure to underpin the use of this technology.

42. Full consideration should be given to the revenue resources required for the use of the broadband network, in addition to the capital expenditure for the initial installation. This is an area where cross-border collaboration with England may offer economies of scale and bring benefits to learners and teachers in terms of systems compatibility and access to materials.

43. Discussion within the Wales Learning Network has led to the suggestion that there might be advantage in adopting a scheme in Wales similar to the Computers for Teachers scheme in England. We would suggest that the loan of computers for a 3-year period to teachers participating in such a scheme might avoid them being viewed as a gift and regarded as part of a teacher's income. This is the current disadvantage of the scheme in England, which requires tax to be paid.

Chapter 5: Progress and Practitioners

44. There are a number of areas in which practitioners at a number of levels (full and part time across schools, colleges, training providers, voluntary sector), will require very similar professional development opportunities. The operation of the flexible curriculum, particularly unitised and credit-based provision and e-learning, and the increasing need for a pool of trained e-learning support tutors, are two such areas. Linking some of these new initiatives into Welsh provided teacher training would be beneficial. Cross-sector staff development is also a useful approach in encouraging multi-agency co-operation in tackling disaffection.

45. We welcome the suggestion that CCETs could be involved in overcoming barriers to flexible deployment and change and would suggest that they could present, particularly when co-ordinated at the regional level, effective forums for the provision of practitioner development. We would recommend that local or regionally focussed CPD could be valuable. This

[6] *A Report on E-Learning and Implications for Post-16 Education and Training*, FEDA Cymru and Fforwm

would endorse the emphasis on local collaborative ventures and could be linked to local resource centres for teachers where teachers can work collaboratively to produce common resources and develop online approaches to teaching and learning materials and engage in professional discourse.

Initial and continuing development of teachers and lecturers

46. (Question 1) We particularly welcome the commitment in the paper to promote increased professional development in further education. Our experience in researching the characteristics of centres of vocational excellence has been that 'first rate teaching by expert staff' is of crucial importance.

47. We would suggest that a clear framework for continuing professional development (CPD) could be developed to support professional staff working in the post-16 sector and ensure that the teaching they deliver effectively equips learners for lifelong learning. Key elements of this framework could include:

- a tariff system for measuring professional development activities
- recording progress in professional development, in keeping with standard practice in other professions
- programmes of CPD offering a range of activities from courses to conferences and workshops
- exchanges and secondments more readily available (for professional and technical updating)
- teacher research scholarships.

48. We support the proposals to consider introducing a requirement for all FE teaching staff to obtain suitable qualifications.

49. (Question 2) Whilst we welcome the suggestion that further funding should be channelled into professional development of FE lecturers, there is no evidence that the GEST programme is the most effective mechanism. Rather than small budgets being made available to individual institutions we believe that centrally managed support and development programmes should be considered. These can more systematically:

- Target support more finely
- Provide expertise on action planning and project management
- Identify and disseminate best practice
- Ensure sharing of good practice between institutions and across sectors.

50. We believe that there is evidence that such programmes lead to more efficient use of resources and greater impact than institution-based funding.

51. (Question 3) We welcome the proposals to forge links between CPD and Communities First[7] areas. We would suggest that CCETs have a key role to play in developing these links and tackling social disadvantage, and CCET partners need to be fully informed about the Communities First initiative and its impact on planning.

Training for governors in schools, FE and HE

52. (Question 5) In terms of the priorities for governor training, our comments relate to FE colleges. We suggest that it would be beneficial to develop a Welsh model of the governance healthcheck that we have developed for the FE sector in England.

53. Results from the early governance healthchecks that the LSDA consortia have conducted in England have indicated a number of priority areas for developments in governor training:

- Key areas where there are further training needs are: Curriculum, Quality, Human Resources Management and Estates
- There is a need for awareness-raising on equal opportunities
- In many cases boards indicated that there was no systematic approach to their individual training needs
- There is an issue about governors receiving appropriate information to enable them to assess college performance both internally and externally
- Governors also need to understand the significance of the centrality of the learner.

54. Application of the model in Wales would test out whether these same priorities apply, and implementation could draw on experience in England where relevant.

Chapter 6: Beyond Compulsory Education

55. (Question 1) We would support the view that the Assembly should build on the concept of CCETs founded on partnership, with an expanded role starting at Key Stage 3. As we have indicated in our comments on earlier chapters, we believe that the CCETs, if well co-ordinated from the regional offices of ELWa, could assist in enabling consultation, cross-sectoral professional development and have a role in the planning of ICT provision.

56. (Question 2) We welcome the recently initiated joint meetings of the National and Higher Education Councils and the establishment of a working group of officers and Council Members to ensure co-ordination around some joint strategic aims. Whilst we would fully support increased flexibility for the two Councils across the boundaries of their respective remits, we suggest that there is a real need for investment in systems for

[7] Communities First is an initiative related to the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy in England, targeting the most disadvantaged communities.

tracking learners and for a unique learner identifier number to facilitate developments.

57. (Question 3) The initial explorations for the Careers Wales On-line 'internet portal' have opened up some very interesting discussions around collaboration across Wales on the collection and holding of data on learners and learning opportunities. There is a great deal of duplication at present, which is likely to increase as each agency tries to fulfil its own particular remit within the more flexible system emerging.

58. We suggest that there is a real opportunity at the present time to establish a common system for collection and holding of data on learning and learners in Wales, certainly within the post-16 systems and preferably post-14 or from age 11. There is a clear link with the development of learner tracking systems that can ensure that however flexibly an individual learner chooses to engage in their studies, their learning route can be recorded and their learning recognised and recorded. A common system and a single internet portal for learners to access could draw services together, including those offered by Careers Wales and ELWa, in a more efficient way.

Chapter 7: Access and the Future of Higher Education

59. (Question 1) We believe that the levels of support recommended in the Rees Report are realistic and can assist in increasing levels of access and participation. The Report recommends that consideration be given to the need to ensure adequate support post-16 in order that sufficient learners are prepared for study at higher levels. We support the Report's proposals on removing the differentials for learner support between full and part-time provision by making access to support contingent on the number of credits studied. We believe that this has the potential to promote access.

60. (Question 2) We support the recommendations of the Rees Report that whilst support could only be possible from the National Assembly to those learners at higher levels normally domicile in Wales, it should not be limited to those studying in Wales. This was felt to be unfair to any learner wishing to study at higher levels in a subject not available in Welsh institutions such as Veterinary Science or for those with grades able to admit them to an acknowledged centre of excellence in a particular area of study which is in another part of the UK. In the longer term it was felt that this would be detrimental to Wales overall.

61. (Question 3) We would welcome the extension of the HEFCW role to include planning, as laid out in the Document. We believe that this would facilitate joint working between the two Councils, which is currently limited with only the National Council having a planning function at present. (Question 4) We would support the initiation of some planning towards combining the two councils of ELWa and moves to make it an explicit long-term aim.

Chapter 8: Outcomes

62. (Questions 1 and 2) We fully support the aim of establishing challenging and achievable outcomes, although we have some concerns over those proposed in the paper. In particular we would suggest that the outcomes should reflect the move towards a more flexible credit-based learning system, so that the targets encourage its implementation.

63. In addition we would support the view being expressed by providers that the targets being developed by ELWa need to be clearly consistent with the required outcomes set by the National Assembly for Wales.

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